INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT ARISTIDE (see page 7)

COMMEMORATOR

Published by the Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party

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COMMEMORATOR MAKES PRESS TOUR IN CUBA

By Commemorator Staff

Commemorator Editor and Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party Chairman, Melvin Dickson conducted a two-week press tour in Havana, Cuba in July-August 2010, inspired by the Oakland-Santiago de Cuba Sister Cities Association to bring first-hand reporting on Cuba to *Commemorator* readers. This and upcoming issues will publish highlights from Dickson's interviews with family members of the Cuban Five, leaders of the National Union of Construction Workers, medical students and administrative staff of the world renowned Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM), a leading representative of the Cuban International Relations Department as well as a Cuban author and

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CCBPP Photo

Melvin Dickson, Editor of The Commemorator, *meets with representatives of the National Union of Construction Workers (NUCW) at their headquarters in Havana, Cuba. Top row, L-R: Juan Alberto Torres Corduoul, General Secretary of the Havana Construction Workers Union; Banbose Shango, Washington Plumbers Brigade; Dickson, Carlos de Dios Oquendo, General Secretary of NUCW; Craig Fulmore, Washington Plumbers Brigade; Rosialbis Galanago Rojas, International Representative of NUCW; Reverend Yonny Malm, Washington Plumbers Brigade; Front row, seated L-R: NUCW Board Members: Maura Portales Fabrega, Lore Ojeda Gutierrez and Lina Gárciga.*

CCBPP Photo

Mirtha Rodríguez Pérez, mother of Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez, one of the Cuban Five held in isolation by the U.S. government in federal maximum security prisons.

Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM)

On August 6, *Commemorator* editor Melvin Dickson interviewed Virgínia Díaz González, Assistant Director of International Development of the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM) about the mission, genesis and history of ELAM with excellent introduction and translation provided by Adelina Allen Hilton, Director of the Department of International Relations for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba.

Virgínia Díaz González did not waste any time in her presentation to explain that the school currently provides free scholarships to students from poor communities around the world, including 150 scholarships for students from the United States. The principles of the medical school tie directly to the theory of the Black Panther Party Ten-Point Program, specifically Point Number Six:

WE WANT COMPLETELY FREE HEALTH CARE FOR ALL BLACK AND OPPRESSED PEOPLE. *We believe that the government must provide, free of charge for the people, health facilities that will not only treat our illnesses, most of which have come about as a result of our oppression, but will also develop preventive medical programs to guarantee our future survival. We believe that mass health education and research programs must be developed to give all Black and oppressed people access to advanced scientific and medical information, so we may provide ourselves with proper medical attention and care.*

CCBPP Photo

Melvin Dickson at Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM) in Havana, Cuba, the world's largest medical school, which opened its doors in 1998, with Virgínia Díaz González, ELAM's Assistant Director of International Development.

Díaz: The concept of the school was first introduced by our President and Commander-in-Chief (Fidel Castro Ruz) in 1998. The devastation of Hurricanes George and Mitch in September and

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EDITORIAL

Health Care Is Not a Privilege; It Is a Human Right

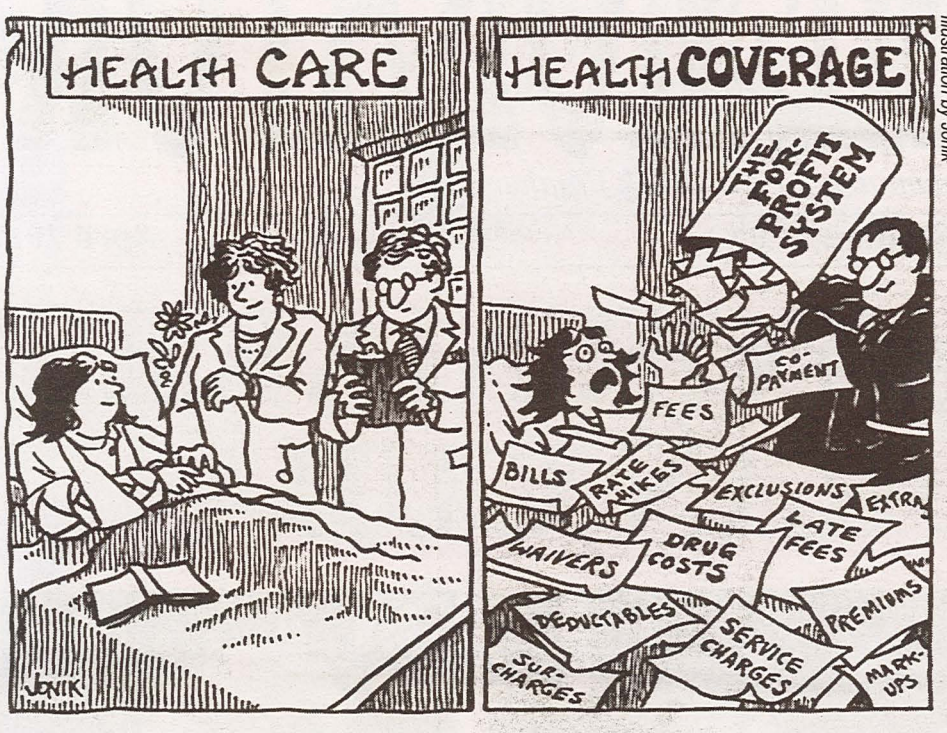

Illustration by Jonik

It was always the BPP's position that health care is a right, not a privilege. Point #6 of the Ten-Point Program states:

WE WANT COMPLETELY FREE HEALTH CARE FOR ALL BLACK AND OPPRESSED PEOPLE. *We believe that the government must provide, free of charge for the people, health facilities that will not only treat our illnesses, most of which have come about as a result of our oppression, but will also develop preventive medical programs to guarantee our future survival. We believe that mass health education and research programs must be developed to give all Black and oppressed people access to advanced scientific and medical information, so we may provide ourselves with proper medical attention and care.*

Even California's Alameda County Public Health Department has acknowledged that accessibility of medicine and doctors is only 20% of the health care problem. The other 80% of the problem of people not having access to health care comes from the broader economic and social institutions, inadequate income (the lack of living wage jobs), an insufficient supply of housing and lack of adequate public education resources. According to a 2008 study entitled *Executive Summary: Health and Social Inequity in Alameda County: Life and Death from Unnatural Causes* (page 14):

"Certain groups of people in Alameda County are getting sick and dying prematurely from unnatural causes. Compared with a white child in the Oakland Hills, an African American born in West Oakland is 1.5 times more likely to be born premature or low birth weight, seven times more likely to live in a home that is rented, and four times more likely to have parents with only a high school education or less."

This report also said:

"In Alameda County the highest poverty areas are in parts of North Oakland, West Oakland, and East Oakland. This geographic distribution of poverty is strikingly consistent with the geographic patterns of death and disease. African American and Latinos are highly concentrated in these high poverty areas, a result of racist institutional policies that have led to physical separation of the races in most U.S. cities. From racially restrictive covenants to redlining to racial steering, U.S. policies systematically denied people of color homeownership opportunities while simultaneously expanding them for lower income Whites. While such policies are no longer sanctioned and the federal government has taken some affirmative steps to end residential segregation, inequalities associated with this shameful history persist. To help those who have been oppressed to rise out of poverty and gain access to a higher quality of life, sound economic and educational policies are needed."

After being in Cuba and seeing at first hand a country where health care really is a right, where the government provides health care for everyone and puts an emphasis on preventive care, I cannot define the medical industry in the United States as anything but an organized violation of human rights.

The fact that everyone in the United States cannot get the health care they need and that is technically available has nothing to do with scarcity of resources. In Cuba, due in large part to the almost 50 years of illegal and immoral U.S. blockade, there IS scarcity — scarcity of medicines, scarcity of some equipment and technology. However, as a result of Cuba prioritizing the education and training of new medical professionals in universities they have built since their revolution, there is no scarcity of trained and caring medical people whose lives revolve around meeting the needs of the people, keeping whole communities in good health. In addition, despite their actual poverty, Cuba's health care is universally available and internationally acknowledged to be among the best in the world.

In the U.S. the five largest health insurance companies are United Health Group, Inc., Well Point, Inc., Aetna, Inc., Humana, Inc. and Cigna Corp. Their combined profit in 2009 was $12.2 billion, up 56% from the previous year. It was the best year ever for Big Insurance. But this was accomplished by *dropping* 2.7 million Americans who had been in private health plans. For those customers who kept their benefits, the insurers raised rates, increased cost-sharing, and cut the share of premiums spent on medical care. Four out of the five companies insure fewer people. Cigna's profits jumped 346%. All but one of the companies increased the number of people they covered through public insurance programs (Medicaid, CHIP, and Medicare). The proportion of premium dollars spent on health care expenses went down for three of the five firms with higher proportions going to administrative expenses and profits.

In the United States, minority and Medicaid children are one-third more likely than well off children to have a ruptured appendix. "If not treated quickly, a ruptured appendix can cause life-threatening complications. Ruptures may result when the warning signs of appendicitis are missed, leading to a delay in surgery to remove the infected appendix. In some cases, parents may not be able to get health care quickly enough," according to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).

The United States has tremendous wealth, but our government denies health care as a right, and allows health care to be treated as a commodity that is owned by private medical corporate interests and sold for a profit. Further profit is extracted from us by insurance companies who make a living off of our inability to afford to pay for our health care. In fact, this is not a health care system at all. Passing laws that require everyone to buy insurance on pain of financial penalties and criminalization, only guarantees an income for those same insurance companies, while still denying us our right to health care.

If anyone knows what compassion and sharing truly are, it is the Cubans — they live it and their health care system is based on it. The misinformation promulgated by the U.S. government and corporate media about Cuba keeps most of the American public from seeing an example of how it is possible, even with meager resources, to prioritize people, community health and life over the profits of a few — rather than the other way around. To denigrate the success of the Cuban system, which does care for its citizens, our government calls them "undemocratic." Our government also covertly and overtly funds, aids and abets terror plots against the Cuban people and the government they have built and defended.

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"SERVING ALL OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES"

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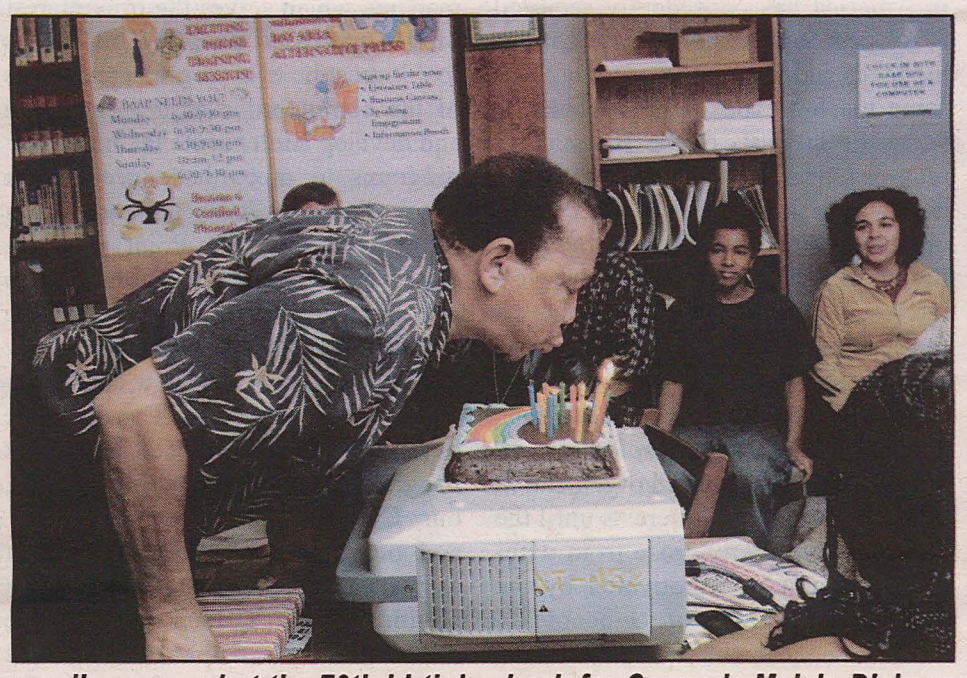
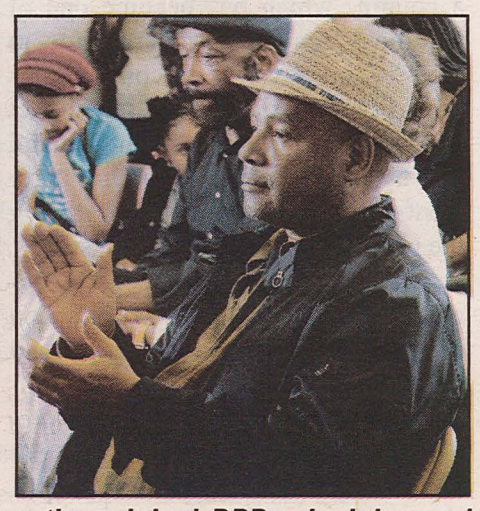
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MELVIN!

A great celebration of a life of leadership and example in the community



All photos on page by Eliot Khuner

A puff and another puff until the flames disappeared at the 70th birthday bash for Comrade Melvin Dickson where friends, volunteers and* Commemorator *supporters came together to celebrate.



Friends, supporters, volunteers and former Black Panther Party members reaffirmed the goals of advancing the original BPP principles and programs based on the Ten-Point Program at Melvin Dickson's 70th birthday celebration at the* Commemorator *office.

Members and volunteers of Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party organized a surprise celebration in November in honor of Melvin Dickson, CCBPP Chairman and Editor of *The Commemorator*, on the occasion of his 70th birthday. The house was packed with over 80 people, young and old, who turned out to show Melvin their appreciation for his tireless work, his full-time dedication not only to continuing the legacy of the BPP and its 10-Point Program, but also to build the programs now and training a new generation of young people in the skills it takes to build long-lasting organization rooted in the needs of the community.

Marlene Krohn, long-time CCBPP volunteer and Advisory Board member, acted as emcee for the event, and many people took the mike to speak about what they have learned from Dickson's work, what they are most thankful for about his leadership and some reminisced about the old days when they first met Melvin in the BPP.

Emory Douglas, former BPP Minister of Culture and renowned contemporary artist, spoke about Dickson's dedication in the struggle for economic and social justice. Elaine Brown, former BPP chair, spoke about working with Dickson during the early days of the BPP in the mid-1970s. Raymond Joe, member of the CCBPP Advisory Board, spoke about meeting Dickson in 1971 in Eugene, Oregon during a speaking engagement by Penny Jackson, George Jackson's sister.

Others who offered toasts and tributes to Dickson were Pierre Labossiere, Haiti Action Committee and CCBPP Advisory Board member; Steve McCutcheon, former BPP member and teacher of martial arts at the original Oakland Community School; Gail Dickson, former BPP member; Naomi Banks who was a student at the Oakland Community School, and her mother Lorene Banks, who was administrator of the Oakland Community School; Gerald Sanders of the Oscar Grant Committee; Mary Eliesar, former BPP member; Frank Keller, former BPP member and staff of the Oakland Community School; and Huey

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Health Care

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In the U.S. Congress they will continue to debate, argue, fight among themselves — all a show for the media — about allegedly reforming the health care system (when there is no actual health care system, only a medical-industrial complex). They will continue to say for years to come that they are "trying" to get medical care to the Americans who have no insurance. In the meantime, our people are dying at earlier ages, dying of more and more treatable and preventable but untreated and unprevented diseases! All because health care in the U.S. is a private commodity that we have to be able to afford to purchase if we want to be well.

To win what is our right, we must build organization that is rooted in our communities and have our own programs that address our people's day-to-day needs. As we fight for the power to control our own destiny, we will continue to bring forward those from our communities who are willing to learn to organize and lead as the fight grows. Join CCBPP today!

All Power to the People!

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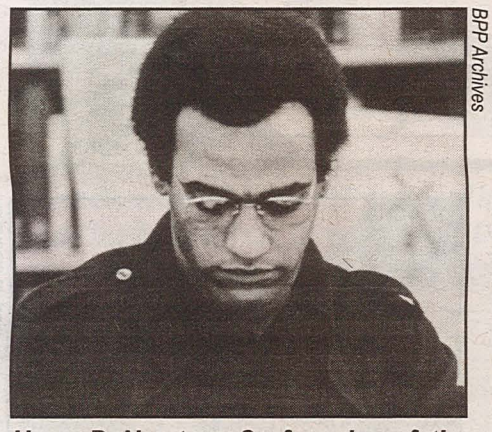
Archives

Statement: May 1, 1971



BPP Archives

Huey P. Newton, Co-founder of the Black Panther Party for Self Defense and leading BPP political theorist.

The original vision of the Black Panther Party was to serve the needs of the oppressed people in our communities and defend them against their oppressors. When the Party was initiated we knew that these goals would raise the consciousness of the people and motivate them to move more firmly for their total liberation. We also recognized that we live in a country which has become one of the most repressive governments in the world; repressive in communities all over the world. We did not expect such a repressive government to stand idly by while the Black Panther Party went forward to the goal of serving the people. We expected repression.

We knew, as a revolutionary vanguard, repression would be the reaction of our oppressors, but we recognized that the task of the revolutionist is difficult and his life is short. We were prepared then, as we are now, to give our all in the interest of oppressed people. We expected the repression to come from outside forces which have long held our communities in subjection. However, the ideology of dialectical materialism helped us to understand that the contradictions surrounding the Party would create a force that would move us toward our goals. We also expected contradictions within the Party, for the oppressors use infiltrators and provocateurs to help them reach their evil ends. Even when the contradictions come from formerly loyal members of the Party, we see them as part of the process of development rather than in the negative terms the oppressors' media use to interpret them. Above all we knew that through it all the Party would survive.

The Party would survive because it had the love and support of the people who saw their true interests expressed in the actions of the Party. The Party would also survive because it would be a political vehicle which continued to voice the interests of the people and serve as their advocates.

The importance of a structured political vehicle has always been apparent to us. When we went to Sacramento, we went for the purpose of educating the people in building of a permanent political vehicle to serve their true interests. In our most recent communication with both the North and South Vietnamese Revolutionary governments, they pointed out that they understood what we were doing and saw it as the correct strategy. They said that a "structured organization is related to politics as a shadow to a man." We recognize that the political machine in America has consistently required Black people to support it through paying taxes and fighting in wars, but that same machine consistently refuses to serve the interests of the Black community. One of the problems is that the community does not have a structured organization or vehicle which serves its needs and represents the people's interests. You can no more have effective politics without a structured organization then you can have a man without his shadow. Oppressed Black people — *the lumpenproletariat* — did not have a structured organization to represent the true interests until the Black Panther Party arose from within the community, motivated by the needs and conditions of the people.

Across the country there have been coalitions of Black people and Black caucuses, but these have not served the people as political vehicles. They have merely served as bourgeois structures to get Black candidates into political office. Once elected, the machinery used to thrust these people into office simply passed out of existence or became ineffective insofar as serving the true interests of the Black oppressed people.

A truly revolutionary vehicle which will survive the repression it encounters daily is made up of a number of characteristics. First of all, there is a small but dedicated *cadre of workers who are willing to devote their full time to the goals of the organization.* Secondly, there is a distinct *organized structure through which the cadre can function.* It is this combination of structure and dedicated cadre which can maintain the machinery for meeting the people's needs. In this way a printing press can be maintained to review the events of the day and interpret them in a manner which serves the people. Information can be circulated about daily phenomena to inform the people of their true meaning. Programs of service can be carried out to deliver to the people the basic needs that are not met elsewhere because the lumpenproletariat are the victims of oppression and exploitation. A cadre and a structure, however, are not what make the political vehicle a revolutionary one. It is the revolutionary concepts which define and interpret phenomena, and establish the goals toward which the political vehicle will work. A revolutionary vehicle is in fact a revolutionary concept set into motion by a dedicated cadre through a particular organized structure.

Such a vehicle can survive repression because it can move in the necessary manner at the appropriate time. It can go underground if the conditions require, and it can rise up again. But it will always be motivated by love and dedication to the interests of the oppressed communities. Therefore the people will ensure its survival, for only in that survival are their needs serviced. The structured and organized vehicle will guarantee the weathering of the test of internal and external contradictions.

The responsibility of such a political vehicle is clear. It is to function as a machine which serves the true interest of the oppressed people. This means that it must be ever aware of the needs of the communities of the oppressed and develop and execute the necessary programs to meet those needs. The Black Panther Party has done this through its basic Ten-Point Program. However, we recognize that *revolution is a process and we cannot offer the people conclusions* — we must be ready to respond creatively to new conditions and new understandings. Therefore, we have developed our Free Breakfast Program, our Free Health Clinics, our Clothing and Shoe Programs, and our Buses to Prisons Program as well as others, responding to the obvious needs of Black people. The overwhelmingly favorable response to these program in every community is evidence that they are serving the true interests of the people.

Serving the true interests of the people also means that the political vehicle must stand between the people and the oppressive forces which prey upon them in such a manner that the administrators will have to give the appropriate response. Such articulation requires us to have a political organ which will express the interests of the people and interpret phenomenal for them. Again, the existence of such a political vehicle is justified only so long as it serves the true interests of the people.

Serving the true interests of the people, however, does not mean that the vehicle is simply a reflector of public opinion, for the opinions of the people have often been molded and directed against their true interests by slick politicians and exploitative educators. Their diversion tactics often lead the people down blind alleys or onto tangents which take them away from their true goals. We can easily see this when we apply the concept of American democracy to the Black community.

Democracy in America (bourgeois democracy) means nothing more than the domination of the majority over the minority. That is why Black people can cast votes all year long but if the majority is against us, we suffer. Then the politicians and educators try to deceive the community with statements such as "It's rule by the majority, but the rights of the minority are protected." If, in fact, participating in the democratic process in America were in the interests of the Black community there be no need for a Free Breakfast Program, there would be no need for Free Health Clinics or any of the other programs we have developed to meet the people's needs. The rights of the minority are "protected" by the standards of a bourgeois government, and anything which is not in their interests is not permitted. This may be democratic for the majority, but for the minority it has the same effect as fascism. When the majority decreed that we should be slaves, we were slaves — where was the democracy in slavery for us? When the majority decreed that we should pay taxes, fight and die in wars, and be given inferior and racist education against our interest, we got all of these things. Where is democracy for us in any of that? Our children still die, our youth still suffer from malnutrition, our middle-aged people still suffer from sickle-cell anemia, and our elderly still face unbearable poverty in hardship because they reach the twilight period of their lives with nothing to sustain them through these difficult times. Where is the democracy in any of this for Black people? Democracy means only that the majority will use us when they need us and cast us aside when they do not need us. A true understanding of the working and effect of American democracy for Black people will reveal most clearly that it is just the same as fascism for us. Our true interests and needs are not being served.

The political vehicle of the people must be guided by a consistent ideology which represents nothing more than a systematic and organized set of principles for analyzing and interpreting objective phenomena. An ideology can only be accepted as valid if it delivers a true understanding of the phenomena which affect the lives of the people. The development of a wide variety of truths about the community, its internal development and the external forces surrounding it will lead, then, to a philosophy which will help orient us toward goals that are in the true interests of the people.

The Black Panther Party was born in a period of stress when Black people were moving away from the philosophy and strategy of non-violent action toward sterner actions. We dared to believe that we could offer the community a permanent political vehicle which would serve their needs and advocate their interests. We have met many foes; we have seen many enemies. We have been slandered, kidnapped, gagged, jailed, and murdered. We know now, more than ever before, that the will of the people is greater than the technology and repression of those who are against the interests of the people. Therefore we know that we can and will continue to serve and educate the people.

All Power to the People!

Congratulations, CCBPP!
In Celebration of 20 years of The Commemorator!
-Richard Wiebe

Largest Prison Strike in U.S. History

Press Blackout on Georgia State Prisoners 6-Day Strike

Black Panther Party Program, Point #9: ***WE WANT FREEDOM FOR ALL BLACK AND POOR OP PRESSED PEOPLE NOW HELD IN U.S. FEDERAL, STATE, COUNTY, CITY AND MILITARY PRISONS AND JAILS. WE WANT TRIALS BY A JURY OF PEERS FOR ALL PERSONS WHO ARE CHARGED WITH SO-CALLED CRIMES UNDER THE LAWS OF THIS COUNTRY.*** *We believe that the many Black and poor oppressed people now held in U.S. prisons and jails have not received fair and impartial trials under a racist and fascist judicial system and should be free from incarceration. We believe in the ultimate elimination of all wretched, inhuman penal institutions, because the masses of men and women imprisoned inside the United States or by the U.S. military are the victims of oppressive conditions that are the real cause of their imprisonment. We believe that when persons are brought to trial that they must be guaranteed, by the United States, juries of their peers, attorneys of their choice and freedom from imprisonment while awaiting trials.*

Thousands of inmates in six Georgia state prisons organized a coordinated work-stoppage strike by remaining in their cells for six days, from December 9 through 14, 2010. Prisoners began returning to their work assignments on December 15, 2010, saying they were calling off the strike "for now" to give prison authorities a chance to respond to their demands. The prisoners had put forth demands for basic human rights in relation to nutrition, health care and education inside the prisons, as well as demands to be paid for their labor and for an end to the exorbitant cost of phone calls. These demands were detailed in a press release the inmates issued at the beginning of the strike.

Although the well-planned, non-violent action was the largest prison strike in the history of the U.S., it received no headlines in mainstream media, was barely mentioned in a few national newspapers, and was absent from network TV national news. On the first day, inmates in ten of Georgia's 30 prisons participated. The full six-day strike action was carried out in six prisons.

The prisoners had put forth demands for basic human rights in relation to nutrition, health care and education inside the prisons, as well as demands to be paid for their labor and for an end to the exorbitant cost of phone calls

Inmates began planning the strike in September of 2010. They set December 9 for its start date and used cell phones to communicate between units within each prison and with inmates in other prisons. The date was set in advance to allow time for prisoners to stockpile food from the commissary and in relation to climate. Because they wanted this to be a non-violent action, the inmates chose a winter date to eliminate the element of the summer heat, in an attempt to keep tempers cool and to curb possible prisoner reaction against the prison authority's aggressive response against the inmates. Information about the plans was spread by family members and through letters, text messages, cell phone calls and word of mouth.

Cell phones are contraband in prison, but inmates can often purchase them from corrections officers who illegally sell such items for their own personal profit.

The night before the strike was to begin, inmates in Smith State Prison disconnected the TVs in the common areas and put them beside the door to be taken away. They knew that TV was the first privilege that prison authorities would revoke in such situations.

On the morning the strike began, when the men's cell doors were electronically unlocked by remote control, each prisoner then closed his door, remained in his cell and refused to report to work. On the second day, prison authorities told the press that they had imposed a prison lock-down as a pre-emptive measure, because they had learned of a prisoner action in the works. However, prisoners who called the *New York Times* on their contraband cell phones explained that the action in progress was *their* action, and that the prison authority's claim was untrue.

The inmates' chief complaint is that they are not paid for the work they do, which includes maintenance of the prison and other government facilities, or for work in prison factories where they make furniture, clothing, signs and other items which are sold to state or local government agencies.

"If they would start paying us, that would reduce crime behind the walls," an inmate told the *Atlantic Journal Courier* on the fifth day of the strike. "Inmates would have the means to get hygiene items and food from the commissary," he explained. Georgia state law prohibits paying prisoners, with the exception of one program with limited participants.

The Clayton County (Georgia) State Prison, one of the six prisons involved in the action, sends out 180 prisoners a day on work details which "save" the county government about $2.8 million dollars a year in standard wages for equivalent work. The workers who would, otherwise, perform this labor as county employees are also deprived of $2.8 million in wages they would be earning, which they could then spend in the local economy, thus helping to reduce Georgia's high level of unemployment.

The prisoners also object to a diet composed largely of starchy and fatty foods, served with no fruits and vegetables, despite the fact that prisoners from some facilities work on large farms and their labor produces a great deal of fresh food that is not used to improve prison nutrition.

Other conditions inmates cited as violations of basic human rights include: the state's denial of access to any rehabilitative educational opportunities beyond earning the equivalent of a high school diploma or training in Baptist ministry; the prisons' excessive fees for the most minimal health care services, which causes extraordinary pain and suffering; the prisons' cruel punishments for minor infractions of prison rules; little heat in the winter and oppressive heat in the summer; excessive telephone charges which have the effect of separating thousands of prisoners from their families, along with many barriers to visitations; and the Parole Board's capricious and regular denial of parole to the majority of prisoners despite evidence of eligibility.

The Clayton County (Georgia) State Prison...sends out 180 prisoners a day on work details which "save" the county government about $2.8 million dollars a year in standard wages for equivalent work.

Leaders of the strike contacted Elaine Brown, former Chair of the Black Panther Party and a co-founder of Georgia's Mothers Advocating Juvenile Justice, to gather outside support. Brown formed the Concerned Coalition to Respect Prisoners' Rights as a vehicle for individuals and organizations wanting to support the strikers in their demands. "This is pretty much an organic effort on their part," Ms. Brown told the *New York Times*. "They did it, and then reached out to me."

Brown also founded the National Alliance for Radical Prison Reform in Locust Grove, Georgia, which includes as members the NAACP, the Nation of Islam and All of Us or None, among other organizations. Brown and her Alliance have spoken to more than 200 prisoners during the six days of the strike and have been trying to get a response from the Georgia Department of Corrections to the prisoners' demands, as well as a full investigation

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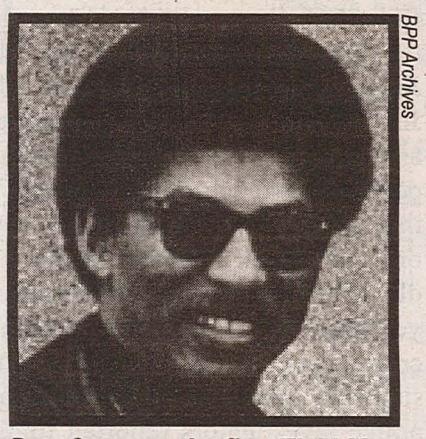
Exiled Black Panther Field Marshall Don Cox Dies in France



BPP Archives

Don Cox was the first Field Marshall for the Black Panther Party.

Commemorator received information from Comrade Kiilu Nayasha, a Bay Area journalist and former BPP member, that Don Cox died while living in exile in France. Don Cox, known as D.C., was the first Field Marshall of the Black Panther Party and in charge of the Panther militia.

His wife Barbara, who lives in Philadelphia, issued the following statement:

"I received a call this morning that D.C., a/k/a Donald L. Cox, has made his transition to the ancestral grounds.

Brother D.C. was 74 years of age, born April 16, 1936, passed on February 19, 2011. He will be cremated and his ashes spread around his home in France and some brought back to California and the Bay Area.

He passed in his sleep of unknown causes. He had just been out in his garden the day before, preparing the ground for spring. His children and grandchildren were preparing to spend time with him in 2012..."

Barbara Easley Cox had just spent last summer with D.C. in France. His daughter, Kimberly, was there in October. They are both thankful for the memories.

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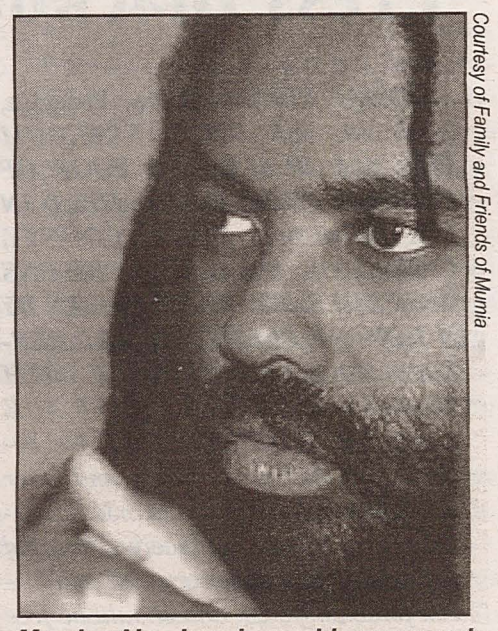
Round Two: Third Circuit Court Panel Re-Hears Issue of Abu-Jamal's Death Penalty on Orders of Supreme Court

Courtesy of Family and Friends of Mumia

November 2010 hearing in Philadelphia including Mumia Abu-Jamal's supporters demanding a new trial for Mumia.



Courtesy of Family and Friends of Mumia

Mumia Abu-Jamal, world renowned political prisoner

By Dave Lindorff

The three-decades-long murder case of Philadelphia journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal, who has sat in solitary in a cramped cell on Pennsylvania's death row for 28 years fighting his conviction and a concerted campaign by the national police union, the Fraternal Order of Police, to execute him, was back in court Tuesday, with a three-judge federal Appeals Court panel reconsidering its 2008 decision backing the vacating of his death sentence, on orders of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Two years ago the three judges, Reagan-nominated Anthony Sirica, Bush Sr.-nominated Robert Cowen and Clinton-nominee Thomas Ambro, agreed with a lower court judge, Federal District Judge William Yohn, that the jury in Abu-Jamal's 1982 trial had been provided with a poorly-worded and confusing jury ballot form and flawed instructions from the trial judge during the penalty phase. The confusion, they decided, could have misled jurors into thinking, incorrectly, that in order to consider a mitigating factor against voting for the death penalty, all 12 of the jurors would have had to agree to it. In fact, under the law, any individual juror can decide that there is a mitigating factor against a death sentence. Only aggravating factors that would argue for a death sentence have to be found by all members of the jury to be applicable.

Though the Third Circuit denied Abu-Jamal's efforts to overturn his conviction, the 2008 ruling on the death penalty was nonetheless widely seen as a victory for him and his attorney Robert R. Bryan, as it meant either that he would avoid execution, instead serving a life sentence without possibility of parole, or that the Philadelphia district attorney would have to request a new penalty phase trial, with a new jury hearing arguments for and against imposition of a new death sentence.

Last January, however, the U.S. Supreme Court threw a new wrench into the case, ruling in an Ohio murder case involving Frank Spizak, a neo-Nazi (he sported a Hitler mustache at his trial) once sentenced to death for random killings of Jews and blacks, that a lower court order vacating his death sentence had been in error. That case had also focussed on the confusing language of a jury ballot form, and of the judge's instructions to the jury.

The high court, which also had pending before it at the time an appeal by the Philadelphia DA of the Third Circuit decision in Abu-Jamal's case, sent that case back down to the Third Circuit, asking Judges Sirica, Cowen and Ambro to review their decision in light of its decision in the Spizak case.

At Tuesday's hour-long hearing, Assistant DA Huge Burns tried to argue that the issues in the Abu-Jamal jury instructions and ballot form were "almost identical" to those in the Spizak case. Abu-Jamal's attorney, Widener University law professor Judith Ritter, who had argued the same issue of a confusing jury instruction and ballot form successfully before the same judges as an assistant counsel in the 2007 hearing, made the counter-argument that the problems with the judge's instructions and the jury form in the Abu-Jamal case were "fundamentally different" from those in the Spizak case.

The three judges seemed, in their initial remarks and in their questions, to be leaning towards the defense view.

As Judge Cowen asked, following DA Burns' argument, "Doesn't the jury form in Spizak significantly differ from our form? I found six differences." At another point in the hearing, he said, "Aren't the cases different in more than degree, but in kind?"

Judge Ambro noted that in the Abu-Jamal case, Judge Albert Sabo had told the jurors, "Remember again, your verdict must be unanimous." Ambro observed, "That's sort of a general overarching instruction." He and Cowen both noted that the Spizak jury had never been told their decision had to be unanimous, while the word "unanimous" was used repeatedly in the Abu-Jamal case, both in the judge's verbal instructions and on the jury form.

Burns tried to counter that while "unanimous" may not have been used in the Spizak case, the jury was addressed as a single entity, at least implying unanimity might be required for the finding of a mitigating factor.

Attorney Ritter homed in on the differences between the Spizak and Abu-Jamal cases, saying, "In Spizak, you had an absence of instructions regarding mitigation that could have confused the jury. Here (in the Abu-Jamal case), it's not silent. Look at number 2 (in the jury ballot form). It starts, 'We the jury have found unanimously...'"

Ritter argued for Abu-Jamal alone at this hearing following the surprise departure of Abu-Jamal's lead attorney Robert R. Bryan only days before the hearing. Abu-Jamal reportedly asked Bryan last week to simply attend the hearing, but to not address the court, leaving that job to Ritter. Bryan says Abu-Jamal apparently felt that since Ritter had won the argument in 2008, she was a better choice than Bryan himself, who many Abu-Jamal supporters felt was somewhat disorganized and less than incisive at the 2008 hearing. Bryan says his proposal that he make introductory remarks and respond to any questions from the judges at the conclusion of the hearing was rejected by Ritter and Abu-Jamal, so he submitted a brief to the court asking to be removed from the case. The judges agreed to his request last Friday. It is the second time Abu-Jamal has dumped his lead attorney on the eve of a critical hearing. In 2001, just as Judge Yohn was discussing dates for a hearing on his habeas appeal, Abu-Jamal fired lead attorney Leonard Weinglass and assisting attorney Dan Williams, angry over a book on the case that Williams had just published. He replaced them with two attorneys, Eliot Grossman and Marlene Kamish, who had little or no death penalty law experience, dropping them later in favor of Bryan.

In the end, while Presiding Judge Sirica was harder to read, Judges Cowen and Ambro, at least, didn't seem to have been convinced by Burns. "You haven't met Miss Ritter's argument," Cowen said. "She pointed out some differences between the (Spizak and Abu-Jamal) forms that are significant."

After which Judge Ambro said, "For example, the word 'unanimous' was not used in Spizak."

Judge Cowen added, "In our case, 'unanimity' was used time and time again, and in quite close proximity to where you find things about mitigating circumstances."

Of course, even if the three-judge panel decides to reaffirm its 2008 decision, the DA's office will almost certainly appeal again to the Supreme Court, where the same five judges who ruled against Spizak and referred the Abu-Jamal case back to the Third Circuit panel could vote to reverse the Third Circuit. In that event Abu-Jamal would have his death penalty reinstated.

If the high court agreed with the Third Circuit, or if it chose not to take the case and let the ruling stand, then the DA would have to decide whether to leave Abu-Jamal with a life sentence, or to ask for a new penalty phase trial, which would take place back in state court.

The defense is hoping for a retrial of the penalty, since that would at least offer Abu-Jamal the chance to introduce new evidence regarding the shooting of Police Officer Daniel Faulkner. For example, the prosecution made a big point of highlighting the testimony of two witnesses, prostitute Cynthia White and taxi driver Robert Chobert, who both described the shooting of Faulkner by Abu-Jamal as an "execution," with Abu-Jamal standing astride the fallen cop and firing repeatedly at him at nearly point-blank range. The problem with that story is that only one bullet — the one that struck Faulkner in the middle of his forehead — hit the officer, yet no bullet impacts can be seen in crime scene photos of the area on the sidewalk where Faulkner lay, and police investigators reported finding no such marks either.

A test of a gun similar to Abu-Jamal's, firing similar metal-clad, high-velocity Plus-P ammunition at a section of old sidewalk concrete, proves that such impact marks should have been clearly visible. While a rehearing of the penalty phase of the trial would not be able to directly raise the issue of guilt, in a penalty phase re-hearing, the defense could be expected to present evidence that the "execution" scenario

Continued on page 18

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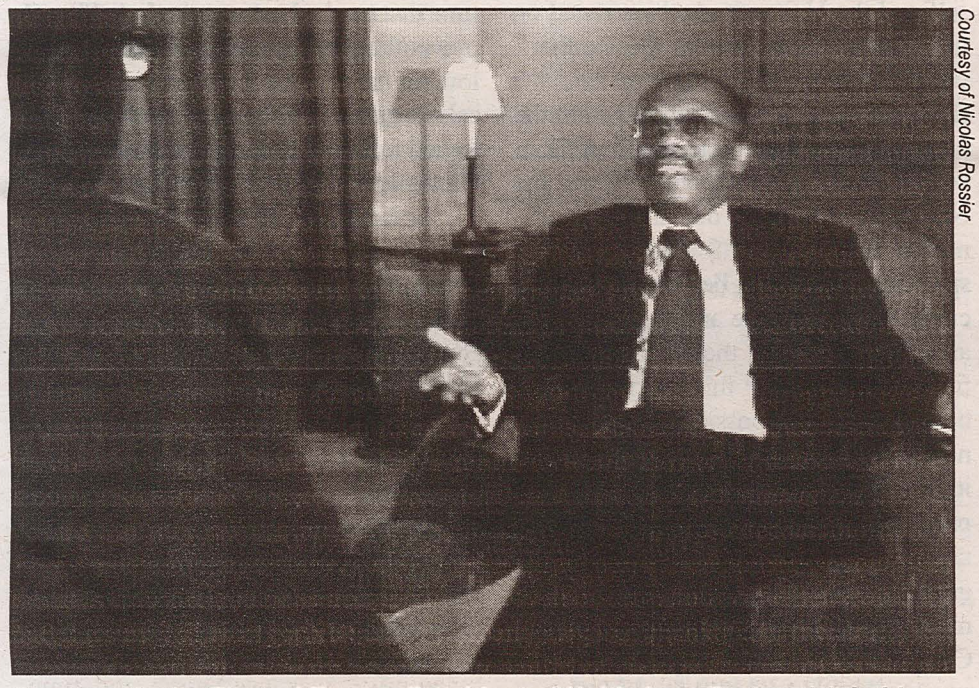
Interview with President Jean-Bertrand Aristide



Courtesy of Nicolas Rossier

Democratically Elected Former President of Haiti, Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Editor's note: *This January marked the first anniversary of the devastating Haitian earthquake of January 12, 2010, that killed more than 300,000 people and left 1.5 million homeless, a catastrophe that has been compounded 100 times over by the poverty imposed on Haiti. Of the $5.7 billion dollars in reconstruction and recovery aid that was very publicly pledged in 2010 by other nations and international financial bodies, only $897 million has been delivered (less than 20%) and very little of that went to the Haitian government. Most of the money went, instead, to hundreds of foreign NGOs that do not centralize themselves to the Haitian government. No funds pledged by the U.S. government have been disbursed, as the U.S. Congress has yet to approve the allocation. The grip of outside financial interests that have maintained control of the island's economy — or lack of an economy — continues to viciously thwart Haiti's ability to govern itself as a sovereign nation. In December 2010, Haitian Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive told BBC news that donors and the international community were not working with Haitians when channeling the aid. He told BBC news that he was constantly being asked why there were no visible results from donated money, and he said, "It's very difficult for me to give explanation for the use of money that I never receive."*

Over one million people are still living in tarp camps in open areas without sanitation. As of December 11, 2010, over 104,918 people had been affected by the cholera outbreak, which was totally preventable had the promised housing, water and sanitation infrastructure been built. At this time, more than 1,000 Cuban and Latin American doctors, nurses and technicians working in Haiti are bearing the brunt of the battle against the epidemic, working with the 550 Haitian doctors that Cuba has trained, free of charge, since 1998 at the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM) in Cuba. Another 400 Haitians are currently being trained at the school and will also return home for the battle.

Commemorator *reprints below a segment of a recent interview by Nicolas Rossier with former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, when he was in exile in South Africa.*

This interview provides insight into the current political situation in Haiti that is never explained in mainstream media. The solution is to be found in real international solidarity between the people of North and South America with Haiti, and eliminataion of the power that international monopoly financial interests still have over Haiti.

On March 15 President Aristide announced that he had received his passport from the Haitian gov ernment and would return to Haiti prior to the country's elections. President Aristide arrived in Haiti on March 19, 2011.

Introduction:

Currently in forced exile in South Africa, former Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide is still the national leader of Fanmi Lavalas — one of Haiti's most popular political parties. A former priest and a proponent of liberation theology, he served as Haiti's first democratically elected president in 1990 before he was ousted in a CIA-backed coup in September 1991. He returned to power in 1994 with the help of the Clinton administration and finished his term. He was elected again seven years later, only to be ousted in a coup in February 2004. The coup was lead by former Haitian soldiers in tandem with members of the opposition. Aristide has repeatedly claimed since, that he was forced to resign at gunpoint by members of the U.S. Embassy. U.S. officials have claimed that he decided to resign freely following the violent uprising. He now lives in exile in South Africa where he still waits to get his diplomatic passport renewed. He is not allowed to travel outside South Africa.

Aristide is still the subject of many controversies. He is reviled by the business elite and feared by the French and American governments, who deem his populism dangerous. But he remains loved by a large portion of the Haitian population.

In a June 10 report to the Committee on Foreign Relations, "Haiti: No Leadership — No Elections," ranking Republican member Richard Lugar denounced the systemic injustice of excluding the Fanmi Lavalas party.

In November 2010, independent reporter and filmmaker Nicolas Rossier conducted an exclusive two-hour interview with former Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in the hills of Johannesburg. He spoke with the former President about his life in forced exile, Haiti's current political situation, and his possible return to Haiti. This is an excerpt from the interview.

"When we say democracy, we have to mean what we say"

NR: Mr. President Aristide, thank you for having me today. My first question is about the earthquake that took place in Haiti in January of 2010. Can you tell me how and when you learned about the tragedy?

JBA: It was morning here. I was at Witwatersrand University here in Johannesburg to work in the lab of the Faculty of Medicine for Linguistics and Neuroanatomy. I realized that it was a disaster in Haiti. It was not easy to believe what I was watching. We lost about 300,000 people, and in terms of the buildings, they said that about 39% of the buildings in Port-au-Prince were destroyed, including 50 hospitals and about 1,350 schools. Up until today they have cleared only about 2% of these 25 million cubic meters of rubble and debris. So this was a real disaster. We could not imagine that Haiti, already facing so many problems, would now face such a disaster. Unfortunately this is the reality. I was ready to go back to help my people, just as I am ready to leave right now if they allow me to be there to help. Close to 1.8 million victims are living in the street homeless. So this is a tragedy.

NR: Your former colleague, the current President René Préval, was highly criticized after the earthquake for being absent. Overall, he was judged as not having shown enough leadership. Do you think that's a fair criticism?

JBA: I believe that January 12, 2010 was a very bad time for the government and for the Haitian people. To have leadership, yes it was necessary, overall, to be present in a time of disaster like this one. But to criticize when you aren't doing any better is cynical. Most of those who were criticizing him sent soldiers to protect their own geopolitical interests, not to protect the people. They seized the airport for their own interests, instead of protecting the victims — so for me there should be some balance.

NR: Can you give us your thoughts on the recent cholera epidemic?

JBA: As for this recent incident of cholera, whether or not it was imported — as the evidence strongly suggests —

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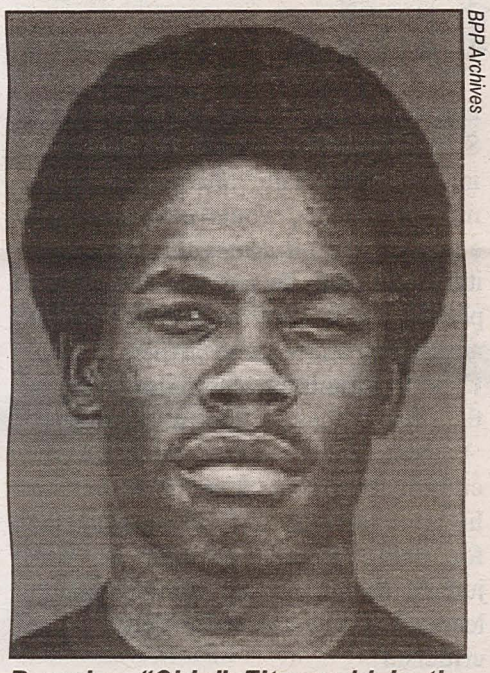
Reminiscences in the Struggle



BPP Archives

Romaine "Chip" Fitzgerald is the longest held Black Panther political prisoner in the United States.

By Romaine "Chip" Fitzgerald

Editors Note: *Romaine "Chip" Fitzgerald, who was a member of the Southern California Chapter of the Black Panther Party and a dedicated member of his community, has been locked up for almost 43 years. In this two-part feature, Fitzgerald, the longest held Black Panther political prisoner, provides a graphic description of his journey to becoming a militant in the struggle and his analysis of the movement, then and now.*

The Black Panther Party poses a dangerous threat to the internal security of the United States.

— John Edgar Hoover,
1st Director of the FBI, Spring 1969

In theory, the U.S. government created the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to enforce federal statutory law by apprehending violators for prosecution, and to gather intelligence on Foreign Agents. But under J. Edgar Hoover's directorship it became Guard Dog, the primary protector of Ruling Circle political and economic interests and the principal prosecutor of domestic political dissent.

The social and political turbulence of the 1960s and 1970s was fueled by Black people's civil rights struggle against the socially crippling diseases of racism, inequality and injustice. At first the Struggle was led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. His passive resistance strategy & goal of ending lynching, police brutality, murder and terror of Black people resonated with the masses across America, even though there was no significant improvement of the racist, oppressive conditions that plagued our lives. The civil rights struggle failed to win us full citizenship rights, but the spirit of resistance inspired Black people to move forward and demand our human rights.

It was Malcolm X who embodied and brilliantly articulated the collective human right to self-determination. So the civil rights struggle became the struggle for human rights and the Black Liberation Movement was born. The central assertion was that Black people had a human right to arm ourselves against the brutality, murder and terror of the Ku Klux Klan and the law enforcement authorities. Enraged by the raw police brutality of the boot, billy club and dogs unleashed on nonviolent demonstrations against racism and injustice; then inspired and emboldened by the fearless examples of Malcolm X, a generation of urban-born and influenced Black people — lumped into the "baby boomers" in the American pop culture lexicon — decided to fight for their collective self-determination and became defiantly militant.

During this intensely difficult period of Black militancy, Huey P. Newton & Bobby G. Seale started the Black Panther Party. Their emphasis on armed self defense against often racist police institutions was most ominous to the ruling circle and to the law enforcement agencies that protect the status quo. The Black Panthers totally shattered the stereotypical image of docile descendants of ex-slaves who were eager to please white people. In Black communities across America the people, particularly the youth, embraced the Panthers' militancy and our Ten-Point Platform & Program.

So the Black youth responded to the voice of the Party by joining up. Their White counterparts, motivated by their opposition to the immoral and unjust War in Vietnam, as well as racism at home, also responded to the Panthers' call for revolutionary activism.

College students and counterculture kids who had angrily rejected the hypocrisy of their parents and mainstream America were inspired to become political activists. They breathed new life into decaying old left radicals who had grown stale and funky with fear and compromise as the right-wing reaction entrenched itself and the U.S. war machine raged on in Southeast Asia. Under the Panthers' vanguard leadership, a coalition from the Black and Latino communities, from the poor working class communities, from college students and liberals formed the New Left Movement demanding fundamental changes to U.S. capitalism. Despite the antagonism between the ruling circle and the people and the repressive attacks on the Left, there was a revolutionary optimism in this country, a new hope opening up possibilities of a bold new world based on true human equality, peoplehood and a quality of life that promoted the people's needs over exploitation and greed. It was the threat of a growing American Revolutionary Movement that let slip, in the words of Ward Churchill, the agents of repression.

Nineteen sixty-nine was hailed as the Year of the Panther. We became the primary target of political repression. In this atmosphere of revolutionary activism the words I quoted from J. Edgar Hoover launched an undeclared war to repress both political dissent and the American Revolutionary Movement throughout the U.S..

I was paroled from Duel Vocational Institute at Tracy in May 1969 after serving 20 months on a Youth Authority commitment for receiving stolen goods. I joined the Panthers as soon as I was released. While at DVI, I discovered my identity as an individual human being who is responsible for one's actions, and as a Black Man, I had a responsibility to serve the interest of Black people, and poor, oppressed people.

Under the Panthers' vanguard leadership, a coalition from the Black and Latino communities, from the poor working class communities, from college students and liberals formed the New Left Movement demanding fundamental changes to U.S. capitalism.

I am a California native, born and raised in the South-Central areas of Willowbrook, Watts, and Compton, the poorest areas in Los Angeles. My family has lived there all my life. My father, now deceased, worked at the Department of Water and Power and my mother directed her energies towards making a good home life for our family. My parents worked very hard to provide me, my older brother and two sisters with some of the opportunities middle class families had. My early childhood memories are filled with an abundance of family love and affection. Looking back, early impressions of my family life were happy, warm, secure and free of conflict or hostility. However, my serenity collapsed when my parents separated and eventually divorced.

A traumatic experience from that time that marked me was the L.A. Sheriff preventing my father from visiting us following the divorce. I remember a physical struggle and fighting as my father was forced from our home. I've never forgotten the look of defeat on his face.

During my adolescent and teenage years I was drawn to street life and street people of dubious character operating outside the legal framework of society. I was young and impressionable and began my apprenticeship in the world of petty crime. We were the thieves and pimps and hustlers, outlaws, con men and thugs who thrived in an underground world without the racist obstructions I would have encountered in the mainstream of society. Karl Marx identified my scene as lumpenproletariat.

During my association with the street people, pimps and hustlers, I began to have frequent encounters with the police and the criminal justice system. I saw clearly that the police took every opportunity to intimidate, arrest and brutalize Black people. I witnessed bullets from their guns murder human beings to terrorize Blacks into remaining in the ghetto and to submit to the authority of white people. This brutality reinforced my feelings of hostility and mistrust stoked by the foul treatment of my father when I was a boy. The police encircled the ghettoes with a shield of violence — just like Frantz Fanon described the colonial police doing to serve the interests of the colonial masters — to impose law and maintain order, always serving the interests of the U.S. ruling circle.

I excelled at living by my wits in the unconventional world of street hustlers. It was a challenge that fulfilled my self-esteem and validated my sense of worth. But it eventually landed me in the juvenile criminal justice system. I was arrested and convicted several times for property crimes, and served short sentences in youth correctional facilities. Going through the process I became aware different 'justice' was meted out by the judicial system: one for Black prisoners and one for White prisoners.

While in juvenile detention I observed that the White juvenile offenders were given preferential treatment in terms of the punishments they received. They were given second and third chances and were returned to their families' custody or placed in boys' homes, county forestry camps or other non-punitive programs that emphasized treatment over punishment for their inappropriate behavior. So their records weren't tainted with criminal convictions that would certainly limit their opportunities as adults.

Black and Latino juvenile offenders more often than not were treated with contempt and as having no redeemable qualities. Second chance opportunities from the white judges or positive recommendations from the counselors were infrequent. We received a disproportionate number of commit-

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Culture and Police Violence in The New, Old West

By Chuck Armsbury and Nora Callahan

We live and work in the Inland Pacific Northwest, a mountainous region straddling northeast Washington State, northern Idaho and western Montana. A small valley about 75 miles north of Spokane, an hour south of the Canadian border, is our home and the offices of the November Coalition. Blackwater (now called Xe) tried unsuccessfully in recent years to build special detention/training facilities in nearby Worley, Idaho. Tribal police forbade it. While they didn't get the prison, they did get the contract to provide training materials to the law enforcement program at North Idaho College.

Over the last 10 years the number of U.S. Border Patrol agents stationed here has sharply increased, and includes men on horses and ATVs patrolling the rugged, mountainous border. The U.S. Air Force Survival School is located about two hours east of us in the mountains, employing private contractors like those two "torture docs" who used to work out of Spokane. They were the psychologists who taught torture techniques to Guantanamo Detention Camp interrogators. Homeland Security jets rattle the windows when they zoom up the Columbia River. Rural policing presences grow, and so has the violence in our domestic police.

On a warm summer night [in 2010], Wayne Scott Creach got out of bed near midnight. He heard something outside his home and business property. Perhaps he knew that other neighbors were complaining of burglaries or prowlers. He put on his pants and slippers, picked up his pistol and a flashlight and went into the night. His property, called the Plant Farm, was a sprawling nursery and landscaping business.

The Plant Farm started out as a hobby; his first calling was Baptist minister. The nursery grew and prospered anyhow, and through the decades eventually became a second passion.

Dashing into the night with a gun to confront a prowler wasn't anything new to the old pastor. His wife was alerted. What happened next is still unresolved, but a gunshot rang out.

Pastor Creach died at the scene, at the feet of Spokane County Deputy Brian Hirzel, who had exited from an unmarked police car in the Plant Farm parking lot. They don't notify owners if they are going to do a stakeout, as Hirzel would later admit.

The public was immediately upset, as there has been a growth of police killings since 1995, and a deadly spate of them these last years, and citizens have been organizing in earnest for about five of them. Emotions and resolve increased after the officer who killed Pastor Creach was allowed to go on vacation to Las Vegas before he had to sit down with his superiors to fully explain what happened that night in the parking lot.

"Officer Hirzel never has to tell us what happened," an irritable Sheriff Ozzie Knezovich explained to the media.

True in fact, a suspect doesn't, but this one was put back on the job immediately after his return from Vegas. And by then, we knew he'd killed before: in Cathedral City (CA) while applying a deadly chokehold. And he was once sued in California after he shot the dog of a 67-year-old woman who was performing CPR on her dying husband. In another Cathedral City instance he was reprimanded for spending too much time with students in the High School parking lot. Hirzel moved to northern Idaho in 2007 and went to work as a deputy sheriff.

Hirzel permitted police investigators to interview him after his return from the Vegas vacation. In the lengthy transcript he says that while parked in the Plant Farm parking lot, and while sitting in the driver's seat, he saw someone (he didn't know it was Pastor Creach at the time) with a gun in his hand, pointed down, walking at angles toward his car. Hirzel says he drew his own gun, pointed it at the approaching figure and ordered him several times to drop the gun, and that the man finally obeyed his order, backed up and put his pistol in his waistband.

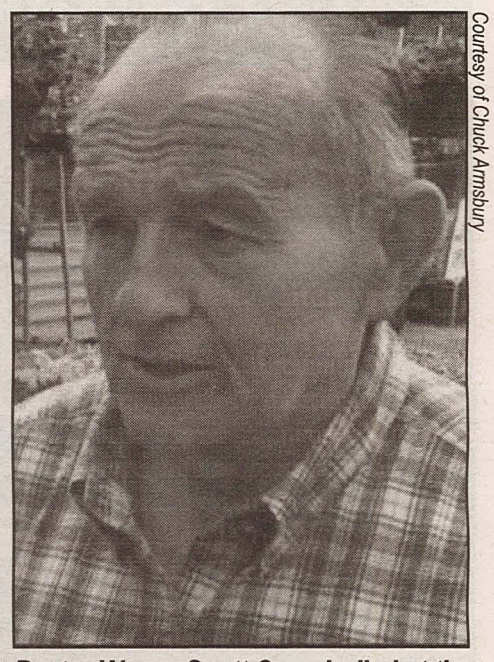
Hirzel exited his car, he says, and ordered Creach to the ground, but Creach refused. At that point, Hirzel claims, he drew his baton and struck the Pastor on the thigh, causing him to buckle and also move to grab his pistol. Hirzel says he saw this movement of the hand toward the pistol and fired his own weapon once, hitting Pastor Creach in the chest. Arriving deputies with radios on and blaring caught Hirzel asking, "Who the (bleep) is this guy"

Spokane County Prosecutor Steve Tucker explained to reporters, "Even in the Old West, if a deputy sheriff comes up on an outlaw and says 'Drop the gun,' you drop the gun or a gunbattle starts."

Old West? We wondered when we read that report. We really aren't the old west out here. And a bunch of us up here are from California anyhow, and we aren't just active and retired LA police, or Aryans.

It took Alan Creach, son of the dead victim, to point out, "My father was no outlaw and was well within his rights to carry a gun to protect his property, as he had done for years."

Today, the primary burden of finding the truth of what happened has fallen to the family of the dead pastor. Alan Creach told news reporters on November 20th, "What we are looking at is a culture clash between law enforcement and culture. Their training says, 'You hesitate. You die.'" It is in complete conflict with the safety of the citizens in this community. The whole issue is uninvited, unwanted, unidentified and unconstitutional.



Courtesy of Chuck Armsbury

Pastor Wayne Scott Creach died at the scene at the feet of Spokane County Deputy Brian Hirzel.

The Creach Family hired its own investigator who has uncovered discrepancy after discrepancy in the official version of what happened, according to Alan Creach.

Recognizing their family needed greater public support, as did the issue, they approached the 5-year-old police accountability committee, recently named SPARC, or Spokane Police Accountability and Reform Coalition.

The acceleration of deaths by police in Spokane began in the middle of the 1990's after the culture of policing took another turn for the worse within the framework of the war on drugs and the militarizing of domestic policing forces. But citizen outcry would wait for formal organizing until one peculiar, brutal beating almost four years ago. Otto Zehm was killed in early spring of 2006.

Zehm entered a convenience store to buy a candy bar and soda pop when he was confronted and smashed to the

Continued on page 20

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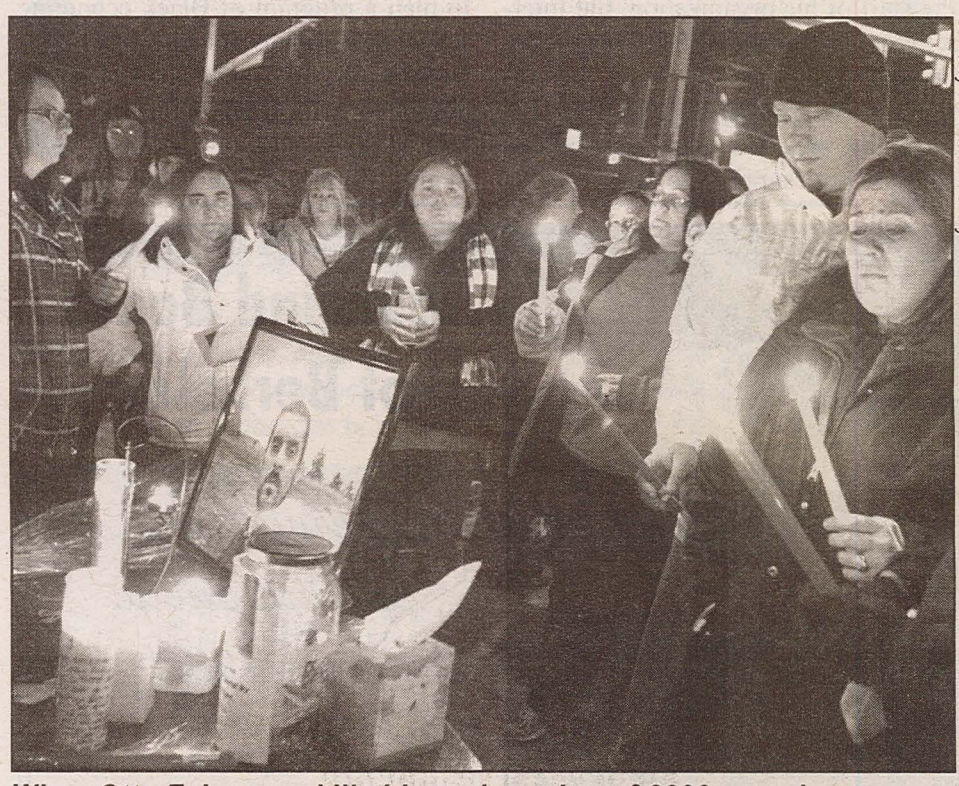
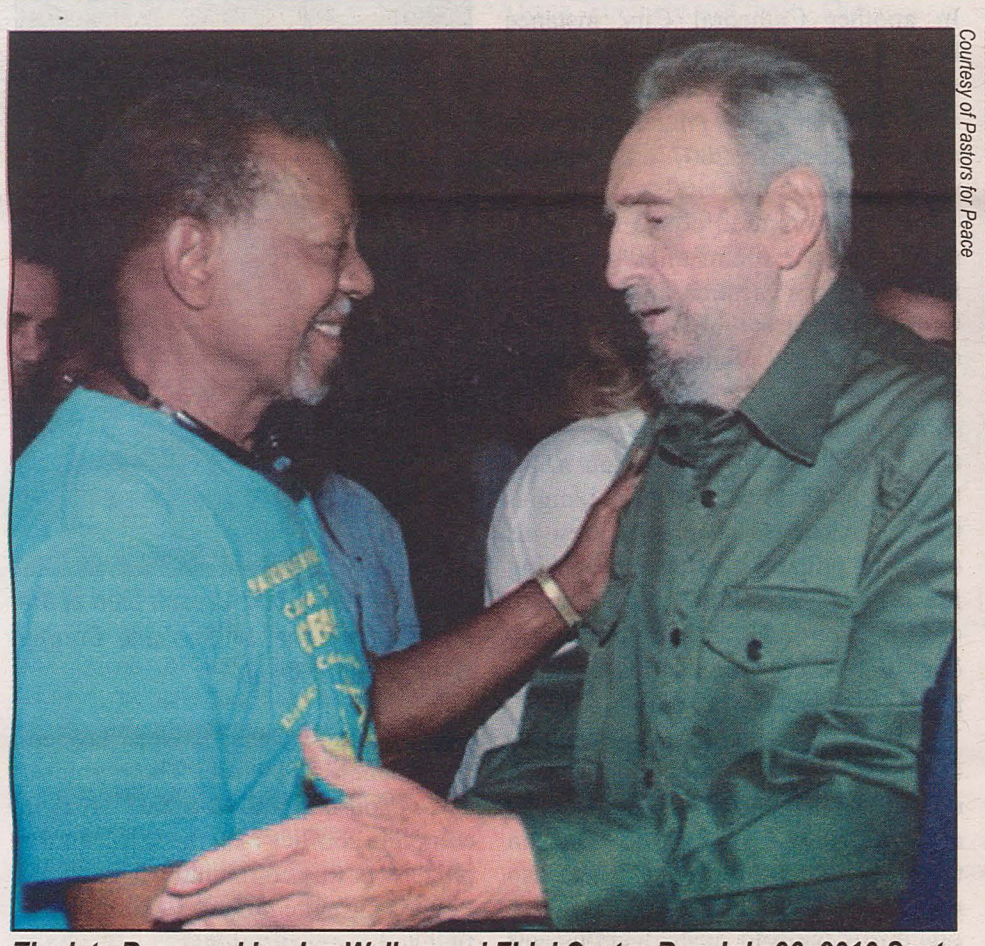


Courtesy of Chuck Armsbury

When Otto Zehm was killed in early spring of 2006, people came out to show respect for the victim. SPARC, or Spokane Police Accountability and Reform Coalition, is still demanding police accountability.

In Memoriam:
Lucius Walker, Jr. August 3, 1930 – September 7, 2010



Courtesy of Pastors for Peace

The late Reverend Lucius Walker and Fidel Castro Ruz July 26, 2010 Santa Clara, Cuba.

Courtesy of Pastors for Peace

The legendary school buses of the Pastors for Peace annual caravans. Through these caravans Pastors for Peace has been bringing delegations of people and donations of needed medical supplies, computers and construction supplies to Cuba since 1990.

Reverend Lucius Walker, Jr., founder of Pastors for Peace, who made his mark on international solidarity through his decades of solid commitment to the struggle to end the United States' embargo against Cuba, died on September 7, 2010 at his home in New Jersey just one month after celebrating his 80th birthday during one of his many solidarity visits to Havana, Cuba.

One of Reverend Walker's most significant recent accomplishments, to which he devoted much of his passion and energy over the last ten years, was to materially respond to the offer from the Cuban Ministry of Health for young people of color and from low-income communities in the U.S. to study on full scholarships at the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM) in Havana, Cuba, and to then return to the U.S. to provide medical care in under-served communities. Walker and the staff of his organization, the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organizations (IFCO), built the administrative processes needed to promote the program, take applications and provide support to the students during their six years of studying to become "liberation doctors."

Currently 125 young people from the U.S. are enrolled in ELAM, 47 doctors have graduated and are in medical residencies in the U.S. or in the process of getting the necessary licenses to practice in the U.S., and 12 of the graduates have provided urgently needed care in Haiti after the earthquake.

A Baptist minister, Walker led IFCO for more than four decades. In 1967 Reverend Walker was called by a group of progressive religious leaders and community activists to be the founding director of the new organization. IFCO's first major accomplishment was to organize the National Black Economic Development Conference in 1969. Rev. Walker chaired this historic conference, which brought together African-Americans of all walks of life from diverse political, social, economic and geographic sectors, to plan a program of Black economic self-determination. It was at this conference that the Black Manifesto was presented, which asked for $500 million in reparations to the Black community from mainline white religious institutions. Rev. Walker was also one of the strategists and founders of the National Black United Fund.

IFCO has assisted hundreds of community organizations and public policy groups, providing technical assistance, training organizers, making and administering grants, and using its global network of organizers, clergy and others to "advance the struggles of oppressed people for justice and self-determination," carrying out the founding principles of IFCO.

IFCO's first international work, in the 1970s, grew out of IFCO's identification with the civil rights and Black Power movements and focused on support for emerging African liberation struggles, through projects such as Relief for Africans in Need in the Sahel (RAINS).

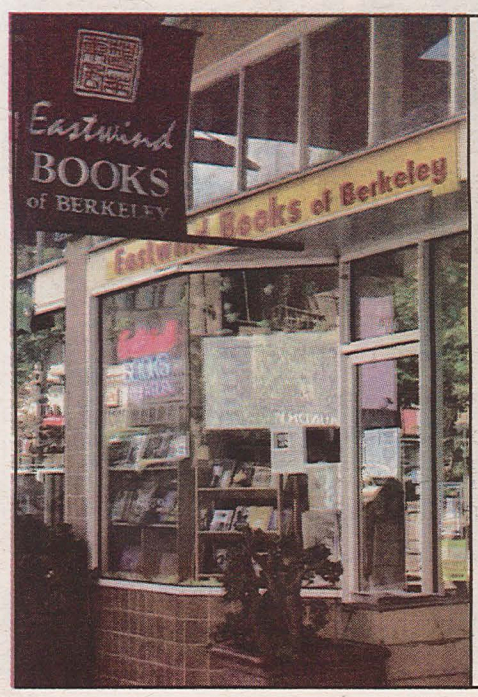
Born in Roselle, New Jersey, he received a Masters degree in theology from Andover-Newton Theology School in Newton, Massachusetts and was unanimously voted in as the first African-American pastor of an all-white congregation at the Hulbert Baptist Church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1958. He, his wife Mary and his infant son Lucius III moved to Milwaukee and there he built a community center dedicated to serving the South side of Milwaukee. While he worked as pastor of the church, he also earned his Master of Science of Social Work from the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee in 1963.

Walker received honorary Doctor of Humanities degrees from Malcolm X College in Chicago in 1969 and from Lehman College in New York in 2006.

In the early 1980s, pastors from Central America approached IFCO's board and spoke of the challenges faced by the liberation movements in their own nations. At the time when the Reagan administration was waging imperialist war and sabotage of peoples rising against long-time brutal dictators, IFCO organized a series of study tours and statewide "Central American Information Week" campaigns around the U.S. to raise awareness about the U.S. policy in the region.

In 1998, when leading a peace and solidarity tour through Nicaragua, his boat was attacked by Contra rebels, and he was wounded. He said he "spent the night praying for a response to getting hit by a bullet that was paid for by my own government." The next morning he announced the formation of IFCO's new program Pastors for Peace, which was conceived, in his words, as "a ministry to victims of U.S. foreign policy" and a vehicle for engaging U.S. citizens in hands-on solidarity and advocacy. Since its founding, thousands of people have participated in more than 40 Pastors for Peace caravans carrying materials to aid people in struggle in Mexico, Central America, Haiti – as well as to New Orleans and the Gulf Coast after Katrina. He and Pastors for Peace also led 21 "U.S./Cuba Friendshipment" caravans that have delivered more than 3000 tons of humanitarian aid to Cuba, as a direct challenge to the immoral and illegal U.S. economic blockade of Cuba.

His many speaking engagements across the country in schools and churches helped educate and activate tens of thousands of people to the fallacy of United States government foreign policy to Latin America in general and Cuba in specific, and the illegality of



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the blockade against Cuba. He also has spoken about and built support for the international struggle to free the Cuban Five, whom the United States federal government framed, prosecuted, and has kept in maximum security prisons in different areas of the country for over ten years. These are five patriotic Cuban men who were keeping tabs on the members of terrorist organizations based in Miami, Florida that were plotting to attack Cuba with the aid of the CIA and FBI. The only "crime" committed by the Cuban Five was that of protecting their people from the real terrorists.

Walker truly put into action what his Christian faith led him to understand needed to be done. "Be faithful witnesses, feed the hungry, clothe the naked and free the imprisoned," he often cited.

Lucius is survived by his five children, Lucius III, Donna Marie, Gail Frances, Richard Manson and Edyth Sheila; his brother William F. "Micky" Walker, his sister Lottie Bethea; his three grandchildren and numerous cousins, nieces and nephews across the U.S. and abroad. He is also survived by a staff of people at IFCO and Pastors for Peace, and a small legion of dedicated revolutionary doctors and doctors-in-the-becoming, who have vowed to continue the struggle for a new society in which solidarity among people is the abiding principle.

In Havana, a memorial was held in his honor at the ELAM school on the same day as the funeral for him in New York City. Fidel Castro sent a bouquet of white roses to the New York funeral service in memory of Lucius Walker. White roses are memorialized in José Martí's poem "I have a White Rose to Tend" symbolizing friendship, eternal love, innocence and heaven.

May all of us dedicated to justice and freedom continue and redouble our organizing efforts, and teach the youth how to organize and fight, so that we have many more Lucius Walkers.

All Power to the People!

CCBPP's Annual Black History Month Event

By Skye Ontiveros

On February 19, members and volunteers with the Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party (CCBPP) came together at the Oakland Humanist Church to hold our annual Black History Month Celebration, honoring Huey Newton's Birthday, and CCBPP's 20th Anniversary of publishing *The Commemorator.* When the doors opened at 4 pm, people of all ages and backgrounds walked in to show their support for CCBPP. The smell of tomato and garlic filled the room as volunteers in the back cooked and everyone else mingled, while listening to tunes from the 60's.

CCBPP kicked off the event with a documentary called "The People's Advocate," about the life and times of Charles R. Garry, a highly regarded San Francisco criminal defense attorney who defended political icons such as Black Panther co-founders Huey Newton and Bobby Seale, Ericka Huggins and others. The documentary revealed Garry's inspiration for becoming an "advocate for the underdog," by showing that he was once an underdog himself, living in a racist state. He grew up in California's Central Valley, in a poor family of Armenian immigrants and experienced exploitation and oppression himself. Garry eventually worked his way through college to become a lawyer.

After the film showing, speakers used their own experience to provide their view of the "monstrous" capitalist system, which is guilty of genocide around the world in its imperialist pursuits, without the representatives of those benefiting from imperialism suffering any repercussions for their actions. Steve McCutchen (MC) kicked off the speeches, talking optimistically about the importance of unity and how possible it is for a new "delegation" to come about. "The goodness of the people will prevail over long term slights!" he stated, adding, "what we also have is an inspired generation willing to bring a new delegation," of revolutionary activists.

Other speakers such as Pierre LaBossiere, founder of the Haiti Action Committee, spoke more specifically about the dangers of the system. He gave examples of how Haiti, already in a bad position economically and in terms of infrastructure before the earthquake, is now in a worse position. Further, despite offers of medical aid from a number of quarters, U.S. troops have intervened preventing much of the assistance from getting into Haiti. He did, however, praise the work of the numerous genuine supporters of the Haitian people who have gotten through, despite the blockade, and still manage to set up countless survival programs, giving food and clothes to the people in the aftermath of the earthquake. These programs were set up "with the ultimate objective for the people to take political power" says LaBossiere.

A total of eleven speakers stressed the importance of coming together and organizing, all referring to various acts of oppression and violence from the oppression in Haiti to the unjust verdict for the cops in the Oscar Grant killing, and the daily killings of civilians by cops.

"We're fighting to organize our communities, because that's what we need. The Black Panther Party did that....This is real!" said one of the speakers, Toussaint L. Du Bois, also a member of Labor Black and Brown Oscar Grant Committee and a member of the CCBPP.

"Our struggle is still here, manifested in our ten-point platform" Melvin Dickson, Chair of the Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party said. The original BPP Ten-Point Program is an outline of the goals and principles of the CCBPP, and we are committed to that legacy on a daily basis in practice. Our campaign confronts the reality of the struggle for the basic necessities, for all black and oppressed communities. These include jobs, food, clothing, decent housing, education, health care, an end to police brutality, justice, peace and "people's community control of modern technology."

Dickson ended by thanking everyone for coming and inviting them to join CCBPP's Saturday morning neighborhood canvasses. He urged the participants to come share the work in the struggle, saying "it's important to engage people faced to face... and there's lots to be done."

The celebration was a huge success, and the speakers, through their different roles in the struggle, dealing with the problem from numerous vantage points, showed that we are not divided in our struggle. We are all victims of the American imperialist machine, and we all ask for the same thing: an end to poverty and to regain our basic human rights.

See photo display on next page.

All Power to the People!

Congratulations, Commemorator!
In Celebration of
20 years of struggle!
~Jon Gausman

Happy Twentieth Anniversary Commemorator!
–Mike Flynn

Happy 20th Birthday Commemorator!
—Madaline Coleman

Thank you, CCBPP!
Congratulations, on the 20th anniversary of the birth of The Commemorator!
-Dave Heller

Congratulations, CCBPP, on your 20th anniversary! Thank you for keeping alive the Black Panther Party legacy!
~Jim Lacy

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TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE. THANK YOU.

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Happy Birthday D

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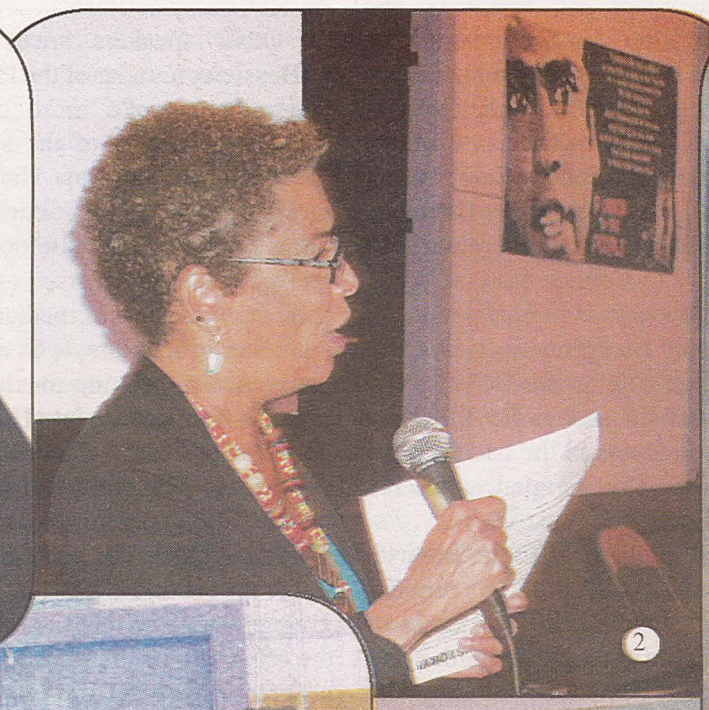
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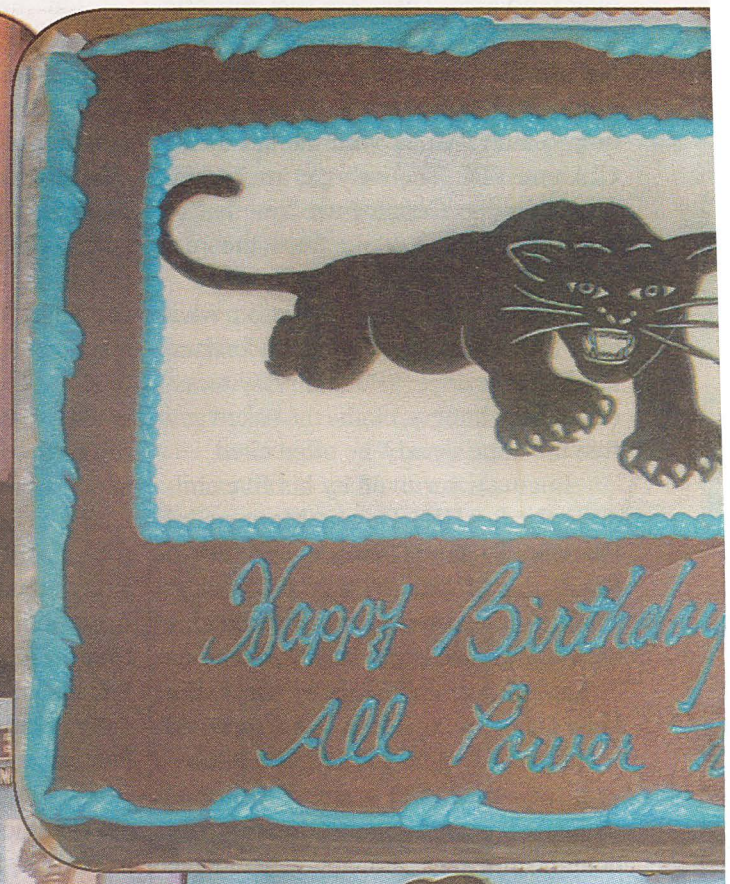

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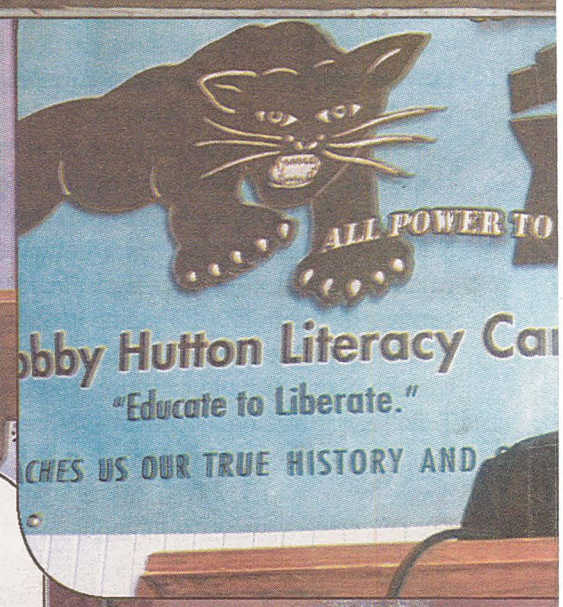

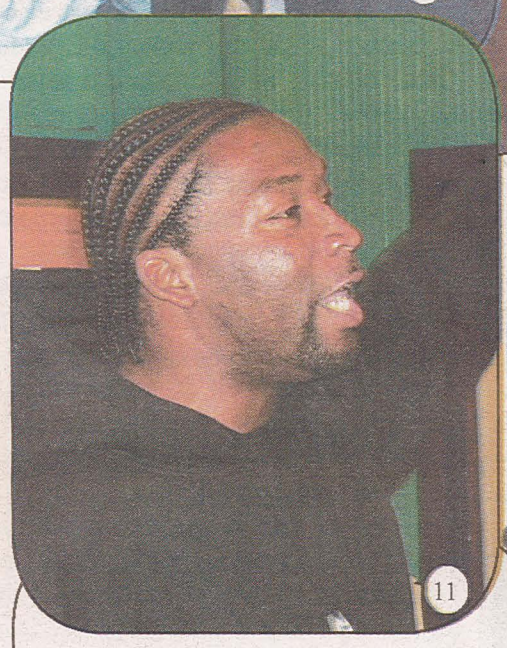
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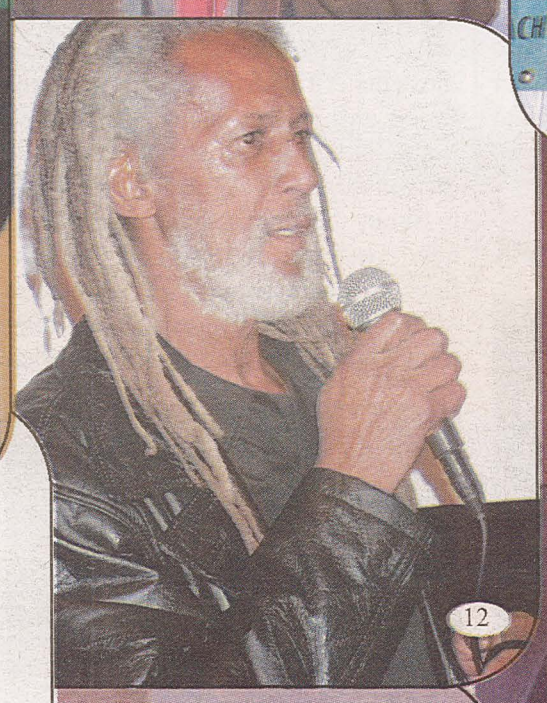
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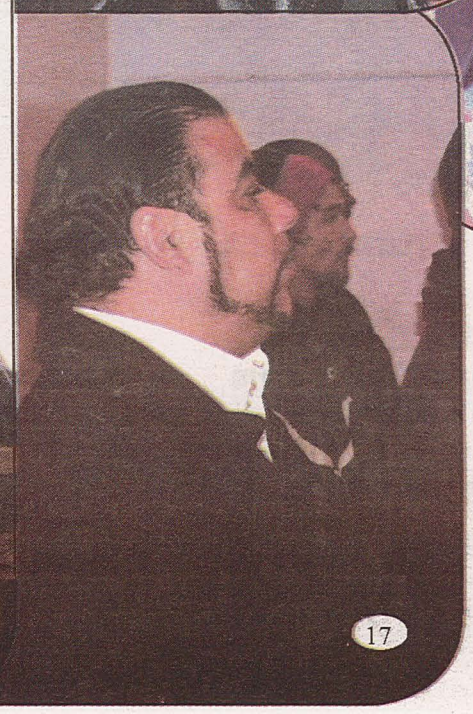
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To: CCBPP
Fr: Henry "Mitch" Mitchell:

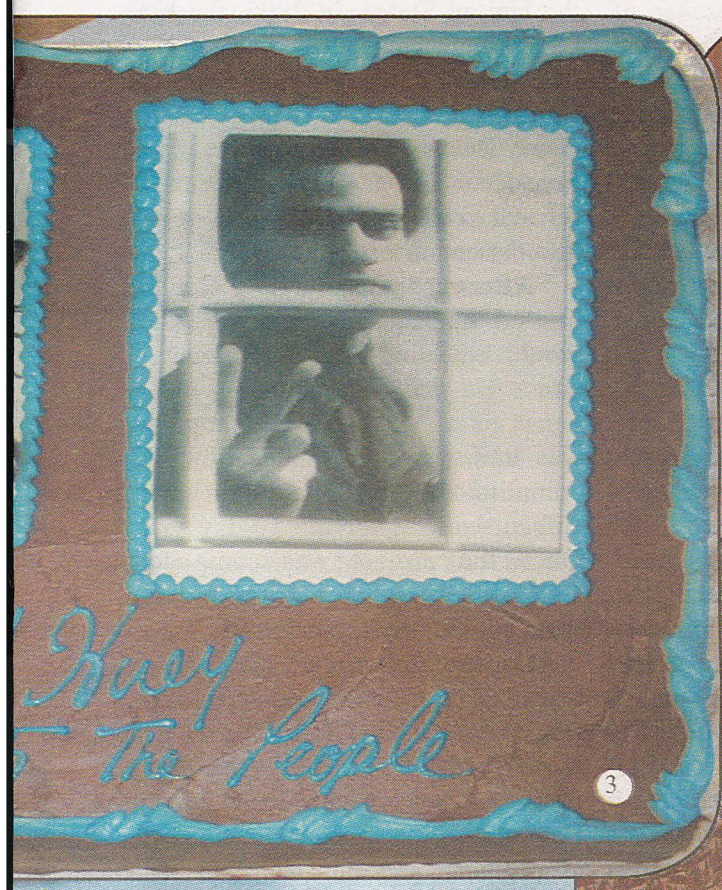
Commemorator has been a strong, resonant voice during these past two decades — a clear voice for those seeking to maintain a level of consciousness in a world that seems more ideologically, theoretically and socially discombobulated than ever. It is a voice for those who want to be aware of the stories behind the story. It is a match struck to the wick of American fascism.

I remember where it had been said that a newspaper is the voice of the people. *Commemorator* has been that voice. The struggle for a secure life for ourselves — Blacks — and indeed, all common people have been duly reflected in the pages of the *Commemorator* newspaper. Thank you, and long live the spirit of resistance inspired by the paper's Co-Founders: Comrades Ralph Moore and Melvin Dickson.

(Henry "Mitch" Mitchell is a former member of the Black Panther Party)

(1) Melvin Dickson/CCBPP Chair; (2) member; (3) Dr. Huey P. Newton's birthd CCBPP volunteer (5) Martin Vance/CCBP (7) Toussaint L. Du Bois/Labor, Black and Sanders/Oscar Grant Committee; (9) An All-Of-Us-Or-None; (10) Pierre LaBossi Bin Fahd Saud/student; (12) Elder Free None; (13) Nadiri Jumoke/ CCBPP Volun Committee; (15) Ajamu Baraka/Georgia McCutchen/former BPP member; (17) family; (18) Ann Fagan Ginger/Lawyer an Dickson cutting Huey's birthday cake.

...rates its 20th Anniversary ...r. Huey P. Newton



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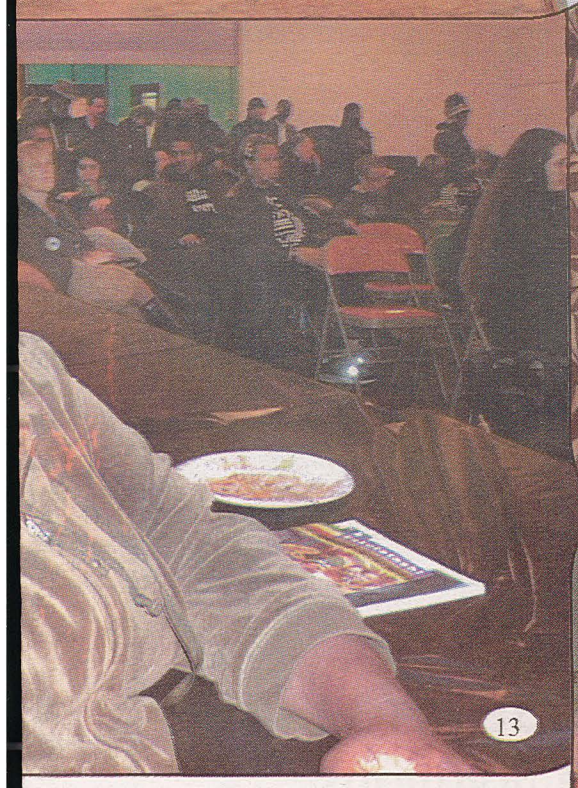
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Marlene Krohn/CCBPP Advisory Board ...ay cake; (4) Skye Ontiveros/student and ...PP Volunteers Coordinator; (6) audience; ...Brown Oscar Grant Committee; (8) Gerald ...thur "Thu" League/former BPP member, ...ere/Haiti Action Committee; (11) Ismael ...man/former BPP member, All-Of-Us-Or-...teer; (14) Aryana LaBossiere/Haiti Action ...Coalition for Prisoner Rights (16) Steve ...Jack Bryson/friend of the Oscar Grant ...d colleague of Charles Garry; (19) Melvin

All Photos CCBPP

Reminiscences

Continued from page 8

ments to what were referred to as hard core state correctional institutions for youth offenders that required parole supervision after release. We became numbers in a system designed less for correcting inappropriate behavior and more for identifying, monitoring and controlling potential criminals, nonconformists and rebels.

Racism was not a word I used or was familiar with to identify what I was experiencing during my juvenile detention and prosecution. But I was intensely aware that to have white skin was a distinct advantage. It was my first encounter with institutionalized racism.

The 1965 Watts Rebellion significantly impacted how I was beginning to see the world. Late evening on August 7th, in the vicinity of Imperial Highway and Avalon Boulevard, a Highway Patrol unit flashed its red lights at a car full of young Black men for a traffic stop along Avalon Blvd. They attempted to arrest the "suspects" and when a confrontation ensued, the patrolmen brutalized the young Black men with nightsticks. Police brutality and murder of Black people was a common occurrence in the Black Community at that time.

Normally, the people would have silently observed the police attack or ignored it, going about their business. But this brutal attack ignited the latent rage of the Black masses. White-owned businesses were seen as symbols of exploitive racist oppression and so were looted and set ablaze; white people were pulled from their cars randomly and beaten; police were fired on by snipers. Although most armed attacks were spontaneous and unorganized, the intent was as deadly as that of a soldier committed to waging war.

The National Guard was eventually ordered into Los Angeles to suppress the orgy of violence and to restore law and order. The official toll was 40 people killed and thousands injured and arrested.

Out of the trauma, death and destruction, a Black solidarity was born. A kind of Black renaissance began that emphasized love and compassion and support among Blacks and the cultural and political identification with Africa. On a personal note, I too had become proud to be Black and identified with Africa. And I committed myself to serving Black interests. But despite all the talk about stopping Black-on-Black crime, it was very difficult to do. Human beings are creatures of habit. Once we're habituated to certain behavioral patterns, they are difficult to break. I found myself torn between wanting to become a better human being and working in the interests of Black people and the lure of street life, the 'Fast Life' and criminal vice.

(To be continued in next issue)

All Power to the People!

Press Tour in Cuba

Continued from page 1

noted authority on racism. Dickson also met the late Reverend Lucius Walker, founder of Pastors for Peace, who celebrated his 80th birthday in Havana during this press tour.

Dickson stated, "My two-week visit to Cuba left me with some strong impressions. I deeply appreciate the genuine hospitality the Cuban people displayed toward me and the delegations I was with throughout my stay, especially in light of the tremendous difficulties under which the Cubans labor due to the immoral, illegal and internationally condemned U.S. economic trade embargo."

"From the moment of my arrival at the José Martí International Airport, I experienced the internationalism that is the basic fabric of Cuban society," Dickson continued. "While standing in line to obtain a ride to my hotel, I met a man named Robert from British Guyana, who was in his mid-20s, was multilingual (English, Spanish and French) and had graduated from ELAM. He is currently an assistant teacher of diagnostic medicine at one of the medical colleges in Havana. He was at the airport to see off a former classmate for the summer school break. There were hundreds of students waiting for departing flights to Mexico, Haiti, Venezuela, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Nigeria, Jamaica, Costa Rica, Puerto Rico and other places. Robert told me, 'Cuba is a poor country, but you eat and you have a place to live. The Cuban teachers push you to learn. It's tough; there are no shortcuts. You do the work; you learn. You don't do the work; you don't learn. I learned Spanish in one year.' "

On Dickson's first day he joined with the members of the Washington Plumbers Brigade, Craig Fulmore, Banbose Shango and the Reverend Yonny Malm. The Washington Plumbers Brigade was visiting Cuba with power tools donated by Americans as a demonstration of solidarity and support on behalf of the Cuban efforts to end the 50-year U.S. embargo and to free the Cuban Five.

While with the Plumbers Brigade, Dickson met the Secretary General of the Construction Trades, Carlos de Dios Oquendo. In a group presentation, de Dios thanked the delegation for their solidarity and explained, "What is more important than the donation of tools is that the people who donate them understand the reason Cuba has a shortage of lifesaving medical supplies, plumbing tools, food, etc. You need to explain to them that the [U.S.] policy not only hurts the Cuban people, but it does not benefit the American people either. The policy violates the human rights of the Cuban families and loved ones from visiting one another. Cuba has a lot to offer the United States. In 2005, the U.S. government refused medical and relief aid from Cuba after Hurricane Katrina. Trained Cuban doctors, the Henry Reeve Brigade, stood ready to save lives, but the U.S. government refused to allow trained professionals into the country to save lives."

Afterward, the Secretary General briefed the brigade on the work they would be doing at the construction site at Havana's Playa district where construction of a housing complex was underway. The delegation was committed to work in solidarity with Cuban workers for the 10-day visit. Once the project was completed, Cuban workers would be moving their families into this housing.

On his return to the U.S., Dickson explained to CCBPP volunteers, "Before visiting Cuba, I had heard and read about how the poverty the country faces causes great harm to its people. But, unlike the poverty that victims of capitalist governments face, such as in the United States where there exists great wealth that is kept in the hands of a smaller and smaller minority of people, Cuban poverty is shared by everyone. It does not carry the stigma and demoralization that are instilled among poor people who are the subjects of capitalism. Despite the poverty, throughout my visit, I saw no one homeless in Havana. Government policies that protect the basic rights of all outweigh individual policy for

Happy Birthday Melvin

Continued from page 3

Newton's brother, Melvin Newton, along with his wife Barbaretta Newton.

The food was great and the kitchen staff included Tina Flores, coordinator of the Oakland-Santiago de Cuba Sister City Association.

The music was filled with the spirit of the movement. Members from the Vukani Mawethu Choir sang South African Freedom songs. Abigail Sims of Richmond, California, sang "Summertime" and talked about the positive impact of the BPP in her community. Eseibio Halliday, CCBPP volunteer and staff member of CCBPP's Volunteer System, with DePaul Rockett, composed and performed a very successful hip hop rap in honor of Dickson and CCBPP.

Dickson thanked everyone for joining the celebration and spoke about the strength of organization and the importance of each role in the organization being filled by volunteers, whether it be full-time or part-time. He put out a call for volunteers to sign up for the Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign, explaining that tutors for adult literacy sessions are needed now, and that CCBPP needs volunteers to help get the word out to potential students. He also spoke about the importance of the CCBPP community canvasses, which bring the programs of CCBPP to people in the community by going to their doorsteps and talking with them where they live about the conditions we all face, the needs we have, and the benefits of joining CCBPP. He put out a call for more volunteers on these canvasses.

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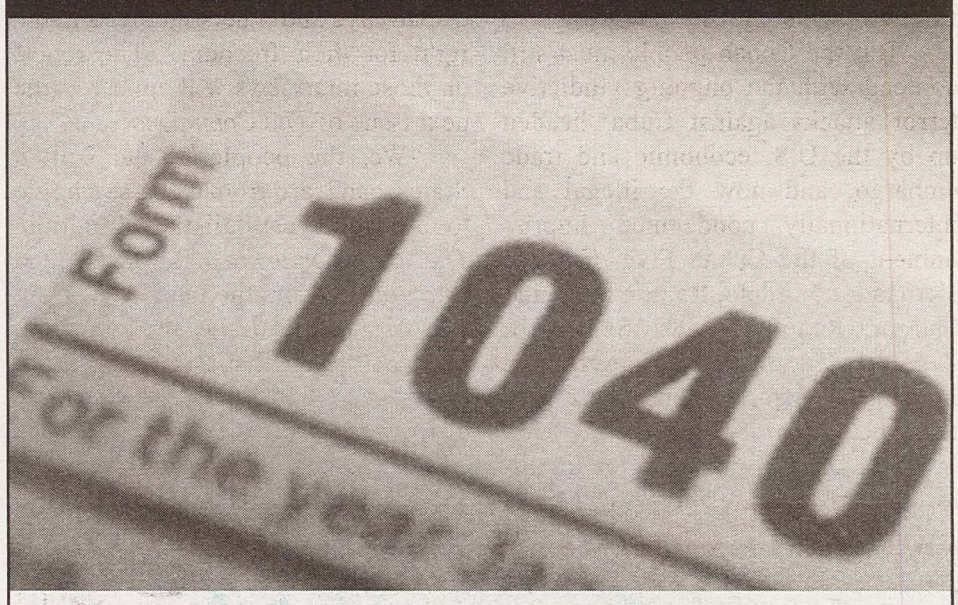

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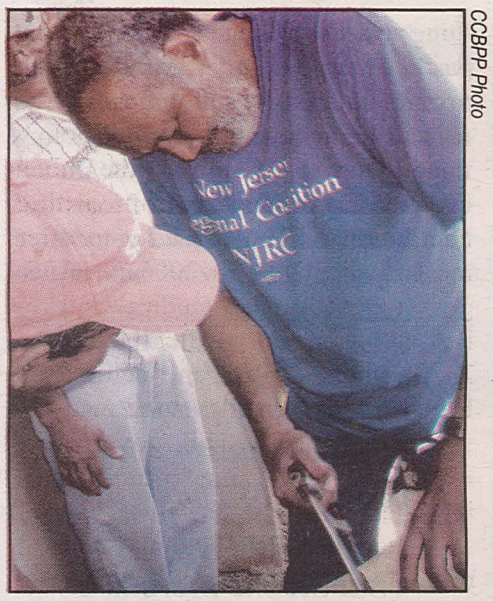


CCBPP Photo

Banbose Shango of the Washington Plumbers Brigade, cuts pipe for one of the units at the Havana Playa apartment complex.

CCBPP Photo

Melvin Dickson (standing, center right) with members of the Washington Plumbers Brigade, joined with workers of the Havana Playa District at a construction site, demonstrating solidarity with the Cuban community in building an apartment building where many of the workers will reside.

personal gain at others' expense. This is a tremendous contrast to what we experience in the poor neighborhoods in the United States where there is widespread police repression, housing foreclosure leading to increased homelessness and a neglected class."

Dickson continued, "While there may be individual cases of racism in Cuba — although I did not see any — racialism, on the other hand, does not exist; there is no institutionalized segregation or oppression. With the Cuban government the responsible party, everyone eats in Cuba, everyone has access to health care, everyone has access to public education (as well as higher education) free of charge, and everyone has a right to employment."

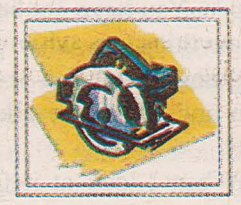
"In 1959 after the Cuban people, under the leadership of Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro Ruz, successfully won their revolution against the U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista, they began ridding their country of unjust economic exploitation, illiteracy and other social ills. They did this by providing people with free education, free housing and free health care."

"But the Cuban people must still contend with the ongoing vindictive terror attacks against Cuba, headed up by the U.S. economic and trade embargo, and now the illegal and internationally condemned imprisonment of the Cuban Five: Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, Ramón Labañino Salazar, René González Sehwerert, Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez, and Fernando Gonzáles Llort. These men have been imprisoned for 12 years in U.S. federal prisons for monitoring terrorists residing in Miami who have a record of murdering the Cuban people. Two of the most notorious are Luis Posada Carriles and Orlando Bosch, who were responsible for the 1976 terrorist plane bombing that left 73 Cuban and Venezuelan people dead. (Carriles now lives in Miami and has avoided extradition by both the Cuban and Venezuelan governments due to the protection of the U.S. government.) The struggle of the Cuban Five to win their freedom is a struggle of high importance to the Cuban people and symbolizes the hypocrisy and cynicism they see in U.S. foreign policy. For this reason, one of my objectives in this visit was to be able to interview family members of the Cuban Five and others involved in the fight for their freedom." The report on those interviews will appear in the next issue of *The Commemorator*.

"We, the people of the United States, can learn from Cuba's struggle to overcome capitalist exploitation. *The Commemorator* is pleased to bring our readers the interviews from this trip in this issue and others to appear in future issues," Dickson declared at a CCBPP staff meeting after his return.

All Power to the People!

Kwanzaa Associates International
2nd National Humanitarian
Power Tool Drive
&
Plumbing Brigade
Trip to Cuba



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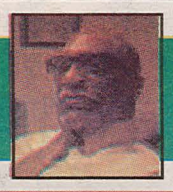

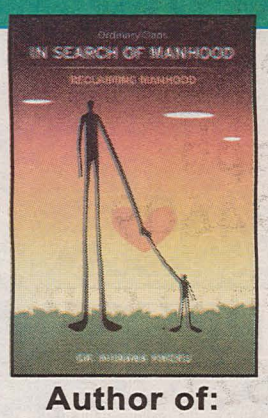

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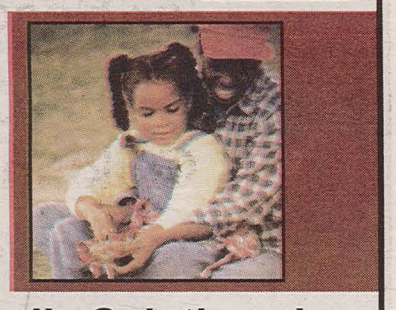

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Congratulations, on the 20th anniversary of The Commemorator!
-Opal Pounds

Aristide Interview

Continued from page 7

it's critical. First, those who organized the *coup d'état*/kidnapping of 2004, paving the way for the invaders now accused as having caused the recent outbreak of cholera, must also share the blame. Second, the root causes, and what facilitated the deadly spread of the disease are structural, embedded in Haiti's historical impoverishment, marginalization and economic exploitation. The country's once thriving rice industry — destroyed by the subsidized U.S. rice industry in the 1980s — was in the Artibonite, the epicenter of the cholera outbreak. The near destruction of our rice industry coupled with the systematic and cruel elimination of the Haitian pigs rendered the region and the country poorer. Third, in 2003 our government had already paid the fees on an approved loan from the InterAmerican Development Bank to implement a water sanitization project in the Artibonite. As you can remember, that loan and four others were blocked as part of a calculated strategy by the so-called friends of Haiti to weaken our government and justify the *coup d'état.*

NR: Many observers in Haiti and elsewhere keep asking me the same question, which is this: what are you doing here and what prevents you from coming back to your own country? The Haitian constitution does not allow political exile. You have not been convicted of anything, so what prevents you from going back? You are a Haitian citizen and should be allowed to move freely.

JBA: When I look at it from the South African perspective, I don't find the real reasons. But if I try to understand it from the Haitian perspective, I think that I see the picture. The picture is that in Haiti, we have the same people who organized the invasion of 2004 after kidnapping me to put me in Africa. They are still there. That means there is a kind of neo-colonial occupation of 8,900 UN soldiers with 4,400 policemen spending, more or less, fifty-one million U.S. dollars a month in a country where 70% of the population lives with less than a dollar a day. In other words it's a paradise for the occupiers. First we had the colonization of Haiti and now we have a kind of neo-colonial occupation of Haiti. In my view, they don't want me back because they still want to occupy Haiti.

...in 2003 our government had already paid the fees on an approved loan from the InterAmerican Development Bank to implement a water sanitization project... ...that loan and four others were blocked... ...to weaken our government and justify the coup d'état.

NR: So you see the elite in Haiti basically influencing those currently in power and pressuring them to prevent you from coming back? There is certainly a more friendly administration now in Washington. Are they still sending the same messages to South Africa regarding you?

JBA: No... (laughs)

NR: I heard that you tried to go to Cuba for an urgent eye surgery and you were not allowed to go. Is this true?

JBA: Allow me to smile... (laughs) because when you look at this, you smile based on the contradiction that you observe in the picture. They pretend that they fear me when I am part of the solution, based on what the majority of the people in Haiti still continue to say. If they continue to ask for my return by demonstrating peacefully, that means you still have the problem. So if you want to solve the problem, open the door for my return.

Before the coup, I was calling for dialogue in such a way to have inclusion, not exclusion — to have cohesion, not an explosion of the social structure. The opposition, with foreign backers, decided to opt for a coup and the result is what I would say in a Hebrew saying: הפחת אל הפח מן , in English meaning, "things went from bad to worse." So if they are wise, they should be the first to do their best for the return because the return is part of the solution, not part of the problem.

NR: You have said that you do not intend to become involved in politics, but rather return as a citizen. Is that your vision?

JBA: Yes, and I said it because this is what I was doing before being elected in 1990. I was teaching and now I have more to offer based on my research in linguistics and neurolinguistics, which is research on how the brain processes language. I have made a humble contribution in a country where once we had only 34 secondary schools when I was elected in 1990, and before the coup of 2004 we had 138 public secondary schools. Unfortunately the earthquake destroyed most of them. Why are they so afraid? It's irrational. Sometimes people who want to understand Haiti from a political perspective may be missing part of the picture. They also need to look at Haiti from a psychological perspective. Most of the elite suffer from psychogenic amnesia. That means it's not organic amnesia, such as damage caused by brain injury. It's just a matter of psychology. So this pathology, this fear, has to do with psychology, and as long as we don't have that national dialogue where fear would disappear, they may continue to show fear where there is no reason to be afraid.

NR: What has to be done for you to be able to return to Haiti? What do you intend to do to make that happen? It's been six years now. It must be very tough for you not to be able to return with your family. You must feel very homesick.

JBA: There is a Swahili proverb which says: "Mapenzi ni kikohozi, hayawezi kufichika" — or "love is like cough that you cannot hide."

I love my people and my country, and I cannot hide it, and because of that love, I am ready to leave right now. I cannot hide it. What is preventing me from leaving, as I said earlier, if I look from South Africa, I don't know.

NR: But when you ask the question to the people responsible here, they say they don't know.

JBA: Well (pause) I am grateful to South Africa, and I will always be grateful to South Africa and Africa as our mother continent. But I think something could be done in addition to what has been done in order to move faster towards the return, and that is why, as far as I am concerned, I say, and continue to say that I am ready. I am not even asking for any kind of logistical help because friends could come here and help me reach my country in two days. So I did all that I could.

...in Haiti, we have the same people who organized the invasion of 2004 after kidnapping me... That means there is a kind of neo-colonial occupation...First we had the colonization of Haiti and now we have a kind of neo-colonial occupation of Haiti. In my view, they don't want me back because they still want to occupy Haiti.

NR: Do you think that the Haitian government is sending signals to the South African government that they are not ready? For instance, maybe they do not want you to return because they are concerned about security issues for you. The Haitian government may not be able to ensure your security. There are some individuals who, for ideological reasons, don't support you and could go as far as to try to assassinate you. Is that part of the problem?

JBA: In Latin they say: "Post hoc ergo propter hoc" or "after this, therefore because of this." It's a logical fallacy. In 1994, when I returned home, they said the same: if he comes back the sky will fall. I was back during a very difficult time where I included members of the opposition in my government, moving our way through dialogue in order to heal the country. But unfortunately we did not have a justice system, which could provide justice to all the victims at once. However slowly, through the Commission of Truth and Justice, we were paving the way to have justice. Now I will not come back as a head of state, but as a citizen. If I am not afraid to be back in my country, how could those who wanted to kill me, who plotted to have the coup in 2004, be the first to care about my security? It's a logical fallacy. (laughs) They are hiding, or try to hide themselves behind some-

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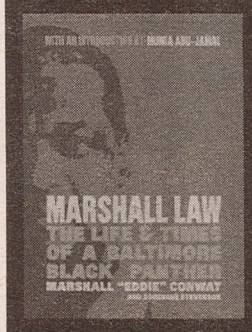
MARSHALL LAW



In 1970, the feds framed Eddie Conway for the murder of a Baltimore City Police officer. He was 24 years old. They threw him in prison, took him away from his family, his friends, and his organizing, and tried to relegate him to a life marked by nothing but legal appeals, riots and lockdowns, transfers from one penal colony to the next.

But they failed.

Forty years later, still incarcerated for a crime he didn't commit, Eddie Conway continues to resist.

MARSHALL LAW
THE LIFE & TIMES OF A BALTIMORE BLACK PANTHER
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thing that is too small... no no no no.

NR: Are they afraid of your political influence — afraid that you can affect change?

JBA: Yes, and I will encourage those who want to be logical (laughs), not to fear the people, because when they say they fear me, basically it's not me. It's the people, in a sense that they fear the votes of the people. They fear the voice of the people and that fear is psychologically linked to a kind of social pathology. It's an apartheid society, unfortunately, because racism can be behind these motivations.

I can fear you, not for good reasons, but because I hate you and I cannot say that I hate you. You see? So we need a society rooted in equality. We are all equal, rich and poor, and we need a society where the people enjoy their rights. But once you speak this way, it becomes a good reason for you to be pushed out of the country or to be kidnapped as I was (laughs). But there is no way out without that dialogue and mutual respect. This is the way out.

NR: In your view, what is the last element missing for you to go back? You said there was one more thing they could do for you to go back. Can you tell us that?

JBA: They just need to be reasonable. The minute they decide to be reasonable, the return will happen right away.

NR: And that means one phone call into the U.S. State Department? One green light from one person? Technically, what does that mean?

JBA: Technically, I would say that the Haitian government, by being reasonable, would stop violating the constitution and say clearly that the people voted for the return as well. The constitution wants us to respect the rights of citizens, so we don't accept exile. That would be the first step.

Now if other forces would oppose my return, they would come clear and oppose it but as long as we don't start with a decision from the Haitian government, it makes things more difficult.

NR: So the first gesture has to come from the Haitian government?

JBA: Yes

NR: And they could make this happen by telling the U.S. State Department you should be allowed to come back, and should come back.

JBA: They would not have to tell the State Department.

NR: So it's not a political decision in Washington? It's between the Haitian government and the South African government?

JBA: As a matter of fact, I don't have a passport because it is expired. I have the right to a diplomatic passport. By sending me a normal diplomatic passport there would be a clear signal of their will to respect the constitution.

NR: But it's the Haitian government that has to do that?

JBA: Yes.

NR: Or they could just renew your Haitian passport?

JBA: Yes

The minority in Haiti – the political and economic elite – is afraid of free and fair elections, and their foreign allies don't want an election in Haiti... ...As long as they refuse to respect the right of every citizen to participate in free and fair democratic elections, they will not fix the problem.

NR: Ask you for a new photo of yourself and issue a new passport?

JBA: (laughs) You see why when I said earlier that we should not continue to play as a puppet government in the hands of those who pretend to be friends of Haiti. I am right because as long as we continue to play like that we are not moving from good to better or good to good, but from bad to worse.

NR: There was a lot of noise lately in the U.S. media about the candidacy of singer Wyclef Jean, who eventually was denied running by the CEP (Haiti's Interim Electoral Commission). Any comment about the whole commotion around his candidature?

JBA: When we say democracy we have to mean what we say. Unfortunately, this is not the case for Haiti. They talk about democracy but they refuse to organize free and fair democratic elections. Is it because of a kind of neocolonial occupation? Is it because they still want exclusion and not inclusion that they refused to organize free and fair democratic elections?

Last year, we observed that they said they wanted to have elections, but in fact they had a selection and not an election. Today they are moving from the same to the same. They are not planning to have free and fair democratic elections. They are planning to have a selection. They excluded the Lavalas party, which is the party of the majority. It is as if in the U.S. they could organize an election without the Democrats. So from my point of view, Wyclef Jean came as an artist to be a candidate and it was good for those who refuse elections because they could have a "media circus" in order to hide the real issue, which is the inclusion of the majority. So this is my view of the reality.

NR: Looking back at the dramatic events that lead to your overthrow in 2004, is there anything in hindsight that you wished you had not done? Anything tactically or strategically that you wish you had done differently and that could have prevented the coup?

JBA: If I could describe the reality from that day in 2004 to today, you would allow me to use the Hebrew phrase again (speaks in Hebrew) מן הפחת אל הפח, which means "from bad to worse". That is how it has been from 2004 to today. When we look at that *coup d'état*, which was a kidnapping, I was calling for dialogue and they manipulated a small minority of Haitians to play the game of moving from *coup d'état* to *coup d'état*, instead of moving to free and fair democratic elections. The first time Haiti had free and fair democratic elections was 1990, when I was elected. Then we wanted to move from elections to elections. So in 2004, we were moving towards a real democracy and they said no. The minority in Haiti — the political and economic elite — is afraid of free and fair elections, and their foreign allies don't want an election in Haiti. That is why they excluded Fanmi Lavalas. As long as they refuse to respect the right of every citizen to participate in free and fair democratic elections, they will not fix the problem.

NR: That is an interesting answer, but I was more thinking of strategic mistakes you made such as asking France to pay reparations in 2003. In doing that, you lost a natural ally that could have stood with you before the coup and within the United Nations Security Council to protect your government. In fact, France stood with the U.S. and did not come to your rescue this time, probably because they were very upset by your demand for restitution.

JBA: I don't think this is the case. The first time I met with French President Jacques Chirac, I was in Mexico. At that time he was with Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin. I invited them to join us to celebrate freedom as a universal value. So that was an opportunity for France to realize that yes, Haiti and France can stand up together to celebrate freedom as a universal value.

In 1789, when France had their revolution, they declared "liberty, equality, fraternity" for all people, but in the back of their minds, slaves were not human beings. To them neither Haitian nor African slaves were human. We fought hard and we got our independence; it was not a gift. It was the blood of our forefathers that was shed to gain our freedom. Despite that, we did not want to celebrate our 200 years of independence with any kind of spirit of vengeance, nor a spirit of glory to remind France of what they had done. It wasn't that. It was an invitation to celebrate freedom as a universal value. So that would give a wonderful opportunity for France if they wanted to do it together. That would not exclude the truth because the truth is they obliged Haiti to pay 90 million francs, which for us today, is more than 21 billion USD. This is restitution, not reparation.

In 2001, here in Durban, South Africa, the UN gave the Haitians and French an opportunity to address this issue of reparations. The French refused, but we respectfully asked them to let us have an opportunity to address this issue in a mutually respectful way. In one word — if today I were the President of Haiti, as I was in 2004, I would ask France to join Haiti to celebrate freedom, but also to address this issue of 21 billion USD. As a matter of fact, a head of state elected by

Continued on page 18

Congratulations, CCBPP on your 20th Anniversary!
-Pearlie Jacob

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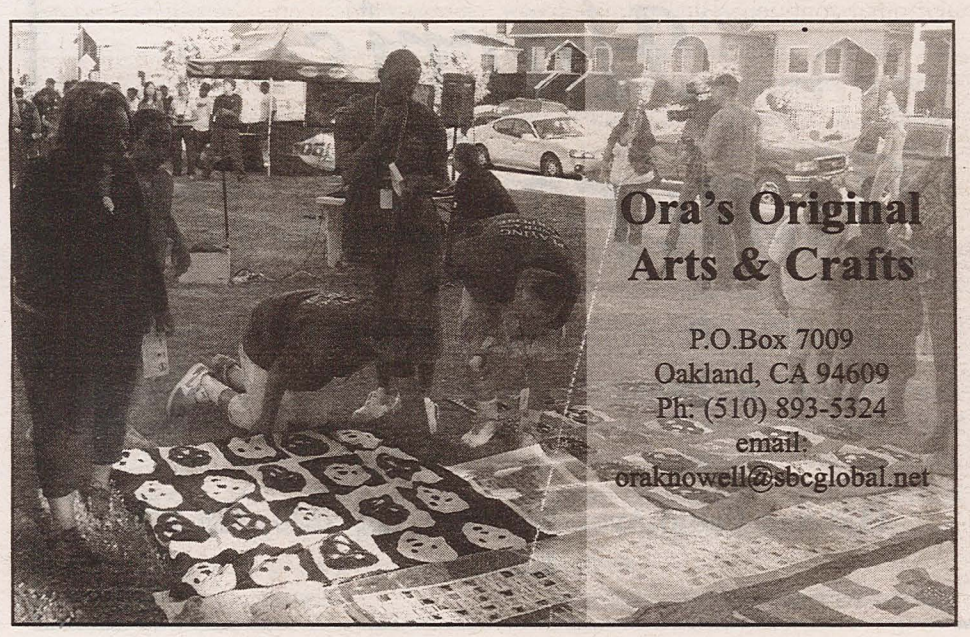
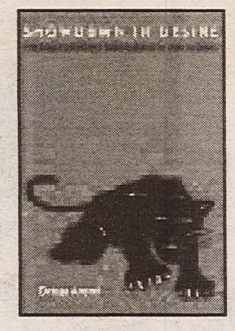


Curtis J. Austin, author, congratulates *The Commemorator* on its 20th Anniversary!

Showdown in Desire: The Black Panthers Take a Stand in New Orleans

by Orissa Arend, Curtis J. Austin and Charles E. Jones



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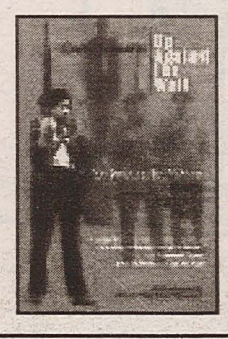

Up Against the Wall: Violence in the Making and Unmaking of the Black Panther Party

by Curtis J. Austin and Elbert "Big Man" Howard

his people must respect the will of the people. When President Sarkozy went to Haiti after the earthquake, Haitians were not begging for cents, they were asking for the 21 billion USD because it is a question of dignity. Either we have dignity or we don't, and Haitians have dignity. That means we respect your dignity, so you should also respect our dignity. We will not beg for cents. Cents will never solve the problems of Haiti. After 200 years of independence, we are still living in abject poverty. We still have what we had 200 years ago in terms of misery. It is not fair. So if we want to move from misery to poverty with dignity, France must address this issue with Haitians and see what kind of agreement will come out from this important issue.

NR: But don't you think now, with hindsight, that this may have cost you your presidency?

JBA: It could be part of the picture but I don't think it was the main reason.

NR: If France had asked the UN Security Council to send UN peacekeepers to maintain yvour government, do you think you would not have been pushed out of power?

JBA: Sometimes you know there are diplomatic words to cover something else. I think at the time, the burning issue was Iraq.

France opposed the U.S. on this issue and that was a golden opportunity for them to sacrifice Haiti in terms of leading and participating in a coup or in the kidnapping of a president.

NR: But the real reason underneath was that France did not want you to annoy them anymore with this request. 2003 was the first time, at least publicly and officially, that a Haitian President made such a request.

JBA: I smile because former colonists defend their interests, not their friends. Even if they call themselves friends of Haiti, they will always continue to defend their own interests.

We could compare what is going on right now, today, post-earthquake, to what was going on in 2004, in order to find out if France is really helping Haiti and if they would change their policy or not. From my point of view, they would not change their policy because they have enough in front of them, in terms of the disaster, to address the issue of 21 billion USD now. But they still don't want to, meaning that if they don't want to address it today after what happened in Haiti in January 2010. I don't think they would have changed their policy in 2004.

That is my way to read it. But maybe one day the French government will take up the issue because men can change if they want to change. I wish they would change their policy to respectfully address the issue with Haiti, because it's a must.

(For full interview, see haitianalysis.org)

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Prison Strike

Continued from page 5

into the treatment of the organizers of the strike.

The prisoners ended their strike action on December 15, as guards had increased the violence against participating prisoners and strike organizers did not want the violence to escalate. Some inmates suspected of being strike organizers were transferred to other prisons. There were also reports of prisoners being beaten by prison guards. Inmates reported actions they believe were intended to provoke them into taking violent action, such as turning off the hot water and guards removing the doors on cabinets in their cells where personal belongings are kept, which can tempt prisoners to steal from each other.

In their communications with media outlets such as the local *Atlanta Journal Courier,* the inmates stressed the solidarity among the prisoners across racial and ethnic lines. "They want to break up the unity we have here," said an anonymous strike leader in an interview with *Black Agenda Report* (BAR). "We have the Crips, the Bloods, the Muslims, the Mexicans and we have the Aryans, all with a peaceful understanding, all on common ground."

The demands of the prisoners are:

- **A LIVING WAGE FOR WORK**
- **EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNTIES**
- **DECENT HEALTH CARE**
- **AN END TO CRUEL AND UNUSUAL PUNISHMENTS**
- **DECENT LIVING CONDITIONS**
- **NUTRITIONAL MEALS**
- **VOCATIONAL AND SELF IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES**
- **ACCESS TO FAMILIES**
- **JUST PAROLE DECISIONS**

In a telephone interview on December 15, 2010, an inmate at Smith State Prison in Glenville told the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* (AJC) that the prisoners decided to end their nonviolent protest to allow administrators time to focus on their concerns rather than operating the institutions without inmate labor. One inmate said, "We needed to come off lock down so we can go to the law library and start... the paperwork for a [prison conditions] lawsuit."

As of this printing, there has been no known official response to the prisoners' demands.

All Power to the People!

Mumia Update

Continued from page 7

presented to the jury by the prosecution simply couldn't have happened, and witnesses would likely be called to challenge the story. That in turn would raise the risk, for the prosecution, that evidence — or a witness recantation — could open the door to a new challenge to Abu-Jamal's conviction.

Even if the Third Circuit or the U.S. Supreme Court rules against Abu-Jamal, and his original death sentence is reinstated, it is not the end of the road in this long-running case, however.

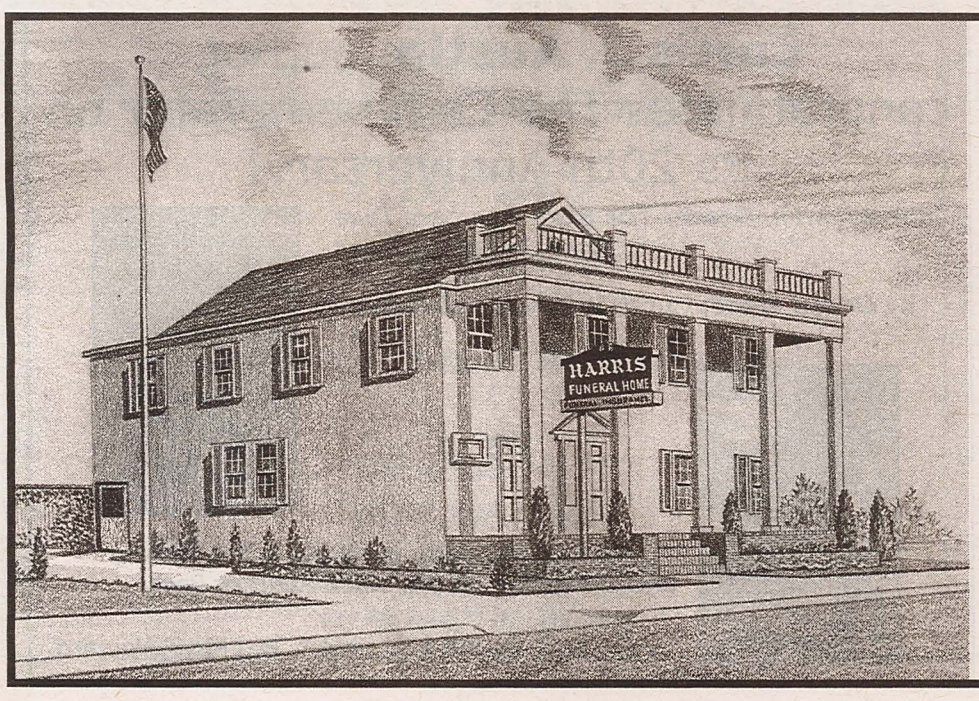
Back on December 18, 2001, when Federal District Judge Yohn tossed out Abu-Jamal's death penalty, he noted in his ruling that he had "mooted" four other defense claims of unconstitutional flaws in his death penalty hearing, on the grounds that there was no need to examine these, since he had already decided to vacate the penalty. As Abu-Jamal defense team attorney Christina Swarns notes, "We have an absolute right to have those claims considered."

In other words, if the death penalty is reaffirmed, Abu-Jamal will be back before Judge Yohn again, where other powerful and compelling objections to the way his initial trial was conducted will have to be reviewed. Among the complaints:

- Prosecutor Joseph McGill's use of a statement made by Abu-Jamal when he was only 15, quoting Chinese Communist Party Chairman Mao Tse-tung that "Power flows from the barrel of a gun," in an effort to sway jurors towards imposing a death penalty.
- The rushing of the case and the inadequacy of Abu-Jamal's legal counsel, attorney Anthony Jackson, with Judge Sabo ordering the penalty phase hearing to begin the day following the jury's guilty verdict, and Jackson not requesting a delay to allow him to prepare. As a result, Jackson called not one character witness to allow Abu-Jamal to develop a case for mitigating factors.
- Prosecutor McGill improperly advised jurors, with the approval of the judge, that they were "not asked to kill anybody," because there would be "appeal after appeal after appeal." The Supreme Court and the Third Circuit, as well as the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, have all repeatedly overturned death sentences because of prosecutors making similar statements to juries, on the grounds that it tends to remove from jurors any sense of the moral consequences of their profound decision. (McGill himself had a death penalty he had won overturned for this exact reason.)
- Finally the defense made the claim that the prosecution withheld from the defense information it had that local police and the FBI had halted years of surveillance of Abu-Jamal after concluding that, as the FBI put it in a note calling off monitoring of Abu-Jamal, "In March 1973, per bureau instructions, captioned subject (Abu-Jamal) was deleted from ADEX and no additional investigation conducted concerning his activities. Sources, however, have continued to report periodically on COOK (Abu-Jamal's family name) and, although he has not displayed a propensity for violence, he has continued to associate himself with individuals and organizations engaged in Extremist activities."

As Asst. DA Burns has said, "This case will go on for years."

All Power to the People!



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*The above menu is a sample of stock at the time of printing and does not guarantee availability or pricing at a later date. Prices and strains available are subject to change without notice. The sample menu is provided for informational purposes only.

"Only individuals with legally recognized Medical Cannabis Identification Cards or a verifiable, written recommendation from a physician for medical cannabis may obtain cannabis from medical cannabis dispensaries."

ELAM

Continued from page 1

October of 1998 prompted him to take humanitarian action. Within two days, he sent aid to victims in the most affected areas of Central America and the Caribbean. He sent medical teams to Honduras, Belize, Haiti, Guatemala and Puerto Rico. The group from Cuba became the most effective in aiding victims of the hurricanes. They started a health care program for the short-, medium-, and long-term stages. They were able to interact with health care systems in those countries and to offer them aid. Our Commander-in-Chief, who always thinks of the future, considered what would happen after the medical brigade had finished their work in those countries.

So he arrived at a better idea for providing assistance to the people: train the personnel so they could return to their countries and give health care to those who needed it. The idea was to bring young people to Cuba, where they would be trained by ELAM. After graduation they would go back to their countries and become part of the health care system, prepared to give assistance to those in need of medical aid.

The main objective of this project is to train the medical personnel needed to provide health promotion and primary health care to those countries. This is also the goal of Cuba's health care system.

We start with family health care doctors, with what we call primary health care, which is administered at community polyclinics. This treatment prevents an entire group of illnesses, so people do not need to go to a secondary level of medical care, that is, to a hospital. The polyclinic is able to prevent this. So wherever there is the possibility of taking care of the people's health in their community, instead of going to a hospital, that is done here. They go to the hospital only when the health problem they have can't be addressed at the community level.

It is very important to know that our school is accredited by the University of California at Berkeley. We are also exploring the possibility of becoming accredited by another university in New York. We do not yet know which university, but we are working on that.

The young people who come to the school must comply with several requirements. They should be between 18 and 35 years old; they should be healthy, without addictions or any serious illness; and they should be college graduates.

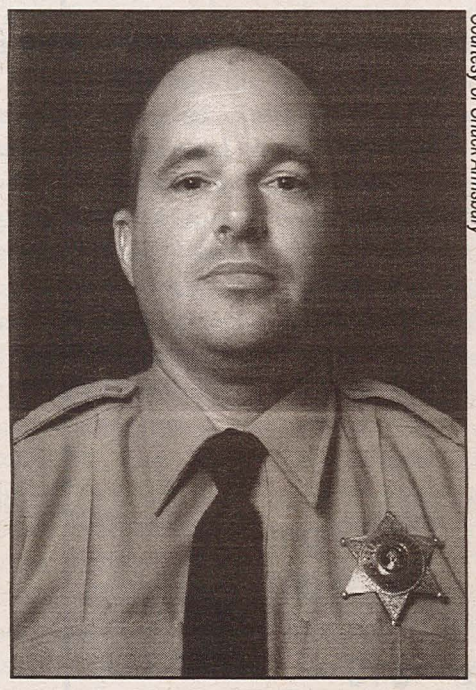
In the case of the U.S., young people coming to join the medical school are recruited by the Reverend Lucius Walker[1] and the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO), which sponsors Pastors for Peace. They screen the young people who are planning to come to Cuba.

The requirements are that they should come from underserved communities that have scarce resources. Not only do African Americans come, but so also do those from the Hispanic and Native American communities. They stay here for 2 years, first taking a premedical course, which is aimed at standardizing the knowledge they have when they come to the school. Also, they must learn the Spanish language. After they have finished the first and second years, they have studied all of the basic areas. Then they start their third year and are distributed throughout all the medical schools in our country. They can do this because they have taken the same courses that are given at all the schools here.

Then they start training with the Cuban instructors at those institutions, together with Cuban students. When they finish their fourth and fifth years, they graduate as general practitioners. They return to their country as general medical care practitioners and become part of the medical care system. But in some countries they have had difficulty being certified in their health care system and having their training validated.

So we have conversations with the medical schools and the Ministries of Health in their countries, to help our graduates obtain certification. In some places these institutions ban Cubans from their membership. They say Cubans coming from Cuba "compete" with graduates from their countries. Why should we speak about "competition"? Is it because Cubans who graduate in Cuba go to other countries and provide services in the most remote areas, no matter where these areas are. This is not done by those who live in those countries, who are already part of American medical institutions. What happens to our Cuban graduates? They go back to the areas they came from and supply their services. That is the aim of our school.

In other countries they put into practice all the rigorous training they received in Cuba. They use the knowledge they received from Cuban doctors to serve people, not to become rich. So it's easy for them to go anywhere to provide their service. They also continue to learn about humanism and solidarity, and return to their communities with those values. We have a Pastors for Peace with the aid-givers in Haiti. So ELAM made a call to all of its graduates who were willing and able to go there. It was also helpful that the Henry Reeve International Brigade had a presence there. The brigade was created with Cubans who graduated from ELAM. Many ELAM graduates from different countries called the school and said they were willing to go to Haiti and offer their assistance. Some are still working in



Courtesy of Chuck Armsbury

Hirzel permitted police investigators to interview him after he returned from his Vegas vacation.

Police Violence

Continued from page 9

floor by Spokane police officer, Karl Thompson. Joined by other cops, Otto was hogtied, tasered, and pummeled with a special baton wielded by another veteran cop. Otto was beaten, then kneeled upon, another kill-by-cop video that anyone can watch online.

Otto was likely in acute respiratory distress when the officers put an oxygen re-breather mask on him. But they put it on him to protect themselves from the froth, the fluids that lung-injured people exhibit. And likely the vomit. The mask was not connected to any source of oxygen. Zehm's brain was deprived of life. The coroner called it a homicide, but there were no charges filed until the feds stepped in earlier this year. A federal trial for the responding officer is pending.

Otto Zehm worked as a janitor and lived with his mother in a working class neighborhood of North Spokane. He had some issues with mental health, not violent ones. He took medication and talked to himself. His police-homicide started when two young women saw him using an ATM machine and saw Otto get upset at the machine. The girls called 911, thinking he was tampering with it, or something like that. The girls had used the ATM before him and weren't sure they completed their transaction, so called 911.

At one point the dispatcher is wondering out loud, or asking the teenagers, "Is he high?"

Spokane-area police and County jailers have killed or wounded mental patients, prisoners, intoxicated and suicidal people in numbers unheard of in this region before this last decade, and this year alone seven citizens have died by police gunfire.

Following the Swedish model of mediation, a proposal to create an independent, investigative ombudsman's office in Spokane was proposed to the City Council in 2009 after a two-year, grassroots campaign. Today, SPARC members celebrate the City's agreement to grant the ombudsman power to look into complaints against police, but organizers are angry and frustrated because at the onset of this victory, more people are dying, not less.

The outrage has brought people to the coalition, which early on was led by indigenous Americans, blacks, students, progressive whites, defense attorneys, church leaders and various nonprofit groups, including yours truly of November Coalition.

The principal goal of SPARC is to repair and instill public trust in police agencies and bring meaningful civilian oversight, accountability, and transparency to area law enforcement.

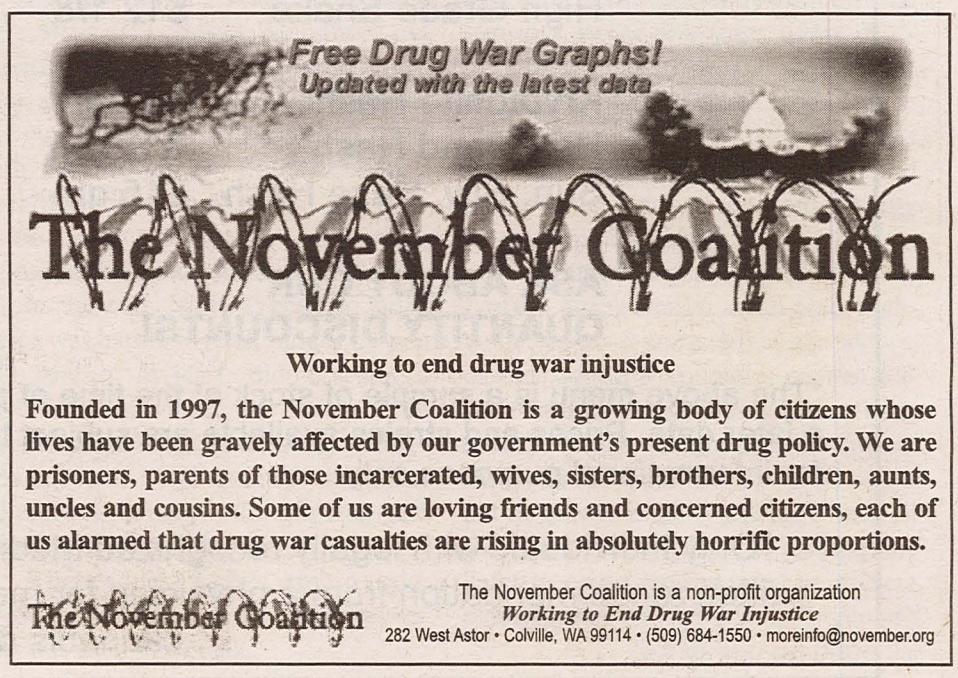
Since beginning to write this article, Spokane City Police shot and killed a white ex-Marine on December 5th, 2010.

Weeks before that death an officer from a multiagency drug task force shot a black, pregnant woman climbing out a window. Full term, she survived to deliver her baby, but faces drug charges. The city's "explaining officer" set only some minds at ease when he told the public that the officer was holding the suspect in one hand, while she was falling out of the window, and the officer's cocked and loaded gun was in the other hand. He went on to say, you know how when you squeeze one hand the other hand squeezes?

Yeah, we know.

(Chuck Armsbury and Nora Callahan are the primary compilers of The Razor Wire *newspaper of the November Coalition. They staff the organization's office in Colville, Washington. Nora's brother Gary is in the 21st year of a 27-year prison sentence, and Chuck has been part of Panther history since 1969. The November Coalition, founded in 1997, has served as an educational and communications resource for prisoners, their families, legal professionals, academics and concerned people everywhere who know there is no justice in the war on drugs.*

All Power to the People!



Working to end drug war injustice

Founded in 1997, the November Coalition is a growing body of citizens whose lives have been gravely affected by our government's present drug policy. We are prisoners, parents of those incarcerated, wives, sisters, brothers, children, aunts, uncles and cousins. Some of us are loving friends and concerned citizens, each of us alarmed that drug war casualties are rising in absolutely horrific proportions.

The November Coalition

The November Coalition is a non-profit organization
Working to End Drug War Injustice
282 West Astor • Colville, WA 99114 • (509) 684-1550 • moreinfo@november.org

Haiti. Six Americans who graduated in Cuba went there on their own, with their own resources, to provide medical aid.

Dickson: Have the students from the United States run into problems with regard to practicing their profession in the U.S.?

Díaz: Yes. They have difficulty entering the health care system in the U.S. When they go back, they have to take three exams, which they must pass, and they have to pay for these exams. It's not easy to get the money they need and their families don't have it. These students have the knowledge, tools and skills from Cuba, but they need the money. Sometimes they work in other areas to earn the money, especially if they come from underserved communities.

We believe that mass health education and research programs must be developed to give all Black and oppressed people access to advanced scientific and medical information, so we may provide ourselves with proper medical attention and care.

Dickson: Approximately how much money would a student need to cover the cost of the exams?

Díaz: I don't have the exact figure, but it's high.

Dickson: Are students required to take these exams to practice their skills in places like, say, Haiti?

Díaz: No. All of the students who graduated and returned to their countries, who then accepted the call made by the school to go to Haiti, were first supposed to come to Cuba to receive training in natural disaster operations. The ones who did not come to Cuba received preparation in other fields so they could work with the Cuban medical brigade, which has been working in Haiti for 11 years. As soon as they reach Haiti, they join and work with the medical brigade.

Dickson: I have talked with young people who have expressed interest in coming to Cuba to study at your medical college. Your school runs on what schedule? Nine months?

Díaz: No. Ten months.

Dickson: So the students return next month?

Díaz: The school year began in September. Some of those students are already coming back. The school year usually ends at the beginning of July. During July and August, those students who were not able to pass all their exams have a second opportunity. The school year for premedical students who can't speak Spanish usually starts in September and lasts for six months. If they are unable to learn to speak Spanish in six months, the course is extended to one year. In February the Spanish-speaking students start premedical school, then join the English-speaking students, and they all start their first curriculum year in September.

Dickson: We created the Commemoration Committee and began publishing *The Commemorator* in 1990, one year after the unfortunate death of the Black Panther Party founder, Dr. Huey P. Newton, who visited Cuba in the 1970s and stayed there from 1974 to 1977. Point Number Six, of the BPP Ten-Point Program speaks to the right to health care. This is consistent with your program.

Díaz: There are 48 U.S. students, from premedical to second-year at ELAM. In all the years combined, there are 113 U.S. students, and there are already 34 graduates. This is the kind of accomplishment young people can take from Point Number Six.

Dickson: This is the type of program that will make a big difference in changing attitudes. Many people in the U.S. are unaware of your program. But thanks to people like Lucius Walker and his organization, there is outreach to many people who are interested in doing something about the right to health care. I will take this information back and we will get the paper out to other people who are interested in doing something about the problem, with people who identify with the cause of Cuba.

Díaz: It is important to know that the Cuban program is free of charge. Students here do not have to pay a dime for it. They have access to everything they need — their uniforms, their books and a digital library with all the publications they need, as well as access to the Internet in the future. So they have all the right conditions here. They have their laboratories and they have areas in which to study. They have an excellent faculty, and their professors are very well prepared. A group of professors are part of the faculty of the school, while others come from different institutions around the country. It is very important to know that our school is accredited by the University of California at Berkeley. We are also exploring the possibility of becoming accredited by another university in New York. We do not yet know which university, but we are working on that.

ELAM has a rigorous program, so the students study very hard. Their career is a difficult one, so they have to be well-prepared to face the challenge. The students from the United States are very intelligent, and most of them finish their education here. I want to share a story with you about the first student from the U.S. who graduated here in Cuba. When he returned to the U.S. he could not find work in the medical field, so a competition was held that offered hospital residencies to five outstanding students. Thousands of students from around the world entered the competition, but we are extremely pleased to say that the U.S. student placed third. So we are very proud of him. This shows that students leave the school very well prepared from the scientific point of view, and in other areas as well. I always give this example because it offers students encouragement to continue.

Congratulations, CCBPP! Happy 20th Birthday celebration to The Commemorator!

— Larry Shoup

Inter-City Services, Inc. Workforce Training Institute

Inter-City Services, Inc. (ICS) Workforce Training Institute is a non-profit 501(c)(3) community-based organization that was incorporated on July 7, 1984.

ICS receives its funding from the City of Berkeley, State of California various government agencies as well as from corporate and individual donations.

ICS' Board of Directors, composed of professionals and community leaders establishes policy. ICS Executive Director and staff, composed of dedicated experts in their field of work, implement the program objectives.

GOALS

ICS' goal is to provide high/growth high/wage employment/training opportunities that replaces dependency with self-sufficiency. ICS' further goal is to help clients remove barriers and enable them to obtain employment that pays a livable wage.

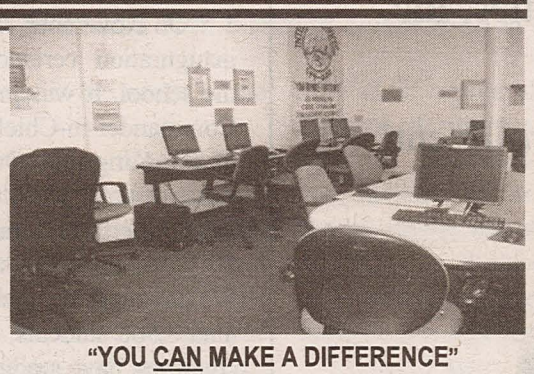
OBJECTIVES

- To promote self-confidence and build character
- To provide educational opportunities and certifications
- To develop marketable skills by providing software and hardware computer training
- To provide job search and job placement assistance
- To provide job counseling and job retention services
- To provide technical assistance to the community
- To provide information and referral services

CLIENTELE

ICS' clientele consists of both youth and adults—18 years and older. ICS' community-based, non-traditional training options provides clients with a positive educational and training environment. Opportunities are available for clients that are serious about up-grading and/or acquiring new skills. Clients includes the following:

- Single-parent families
- TANF recipients
- High-School Dropouts
- Unemployed—Underemployed
- Unskilled—under skilled
- Public/Private Sector employees
- Individuals with Disabilities
- Veterans
- Homeless
- Low/Moderate Income
- Substance Abusers
- Displaced Homemakers
- Immigrants



"YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE"

ICS works with clients from various economic backgrounds. We have 23 years of experience working with clients that have multiple barriers to employment. Our program utilizes a client-centered approach in the provision of all services.

ICS operates a WIA training component that specifically provides ***tuition-free*** skill training and job placement services to all eligible veterans. Our ***"Veteran Employment-Related Assistance Program"*** is the only Veterans' specific employment/training and job placement agency in the East Bay. Please join us in our ***"Tell A Vet Campaign".*** Again, please, "Tell A Vet" thank you.

Enrollment

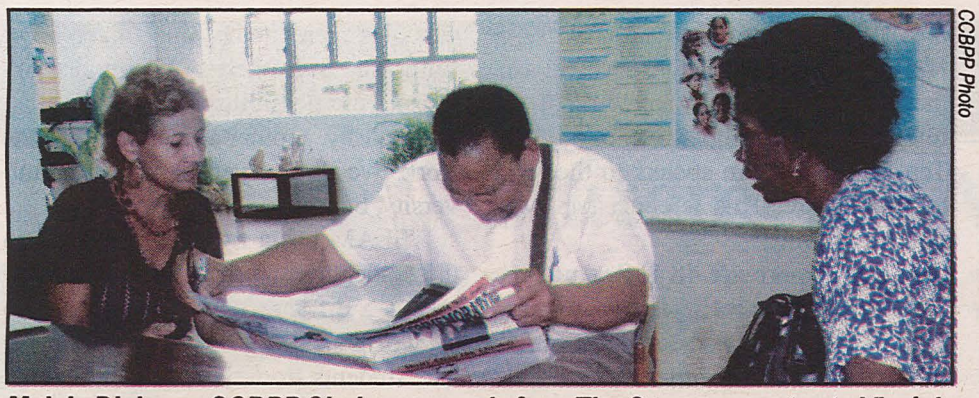
ICS is an open entry/open exit institution. We provide quality educational service and vocational skill training year round. Students may obtain and/or submit applications Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

ICS Programs and Student Services

Our purpose is to provide employment/training and educational opportunities to eligible applicants which includes:

- **Office Automation** masters Word, Excel, Access, and PowerPoint. Training progress from a basic foundation of keyboarding to more sophisticated operation such as text editing, data entry accounting applications, database management and marketing presentations. (8:30-11:30 & 1-4 M-F, 6-9 TTH)
- **Computer Repair** - Graduates of the Computer Repair program will be able to assemble, install, and support and maintain personal computers and peripherals, troubleshoot problems, make repairs, and perform upgrades. (9-12 & 1-4 M-F)
- **GED Preparation/Adult Basic Education** - Educational coursework that includes GED test preparation, personal skill development and literacy tutoring to enhance the client's ability to successfully pass GED test, complete the training, pass pre-employment tests, and get a job. (9:30-12:30 M-F)
- **Job Preparation**—Resume prep, employment workshops, internet access, on-line job search, pre-employment test prep and application submission.
- **Job Readiness Certification**– Will include: (a) enrollment into "One-Stop Career Center" universal services (b) Completion of a resume (c) Obtaining an "e-mail" Account (d) Establishment of a CalJob account via Employment Development Department (e) Completion of a "Job Search Portfolio" (that would minimally include cover letter, a "Thank You" letter/card, and master application on hard-copy and disc) (f) Completion of Job Training (where applicable).
- **Case Management & Counseling Services** Vocational/Educational counseling.
- **ICS Computer Tech Services**—Computer Systems can be purchased within your budget.

3269 Adeline Street Phone: 510-655-3552
Berkeley, CA 94703 Fax: 510-655-3554
www.icsworks.com



CCBPP Photo

Melvin Dickson, CCBPP Chairman, reads from The Commemorator to Virgínia Díaz González, Assistant Director of International Development at ELAM, with Adelina Allen Hilton, Director of the Department of International Relations for the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party, translating.

CCBPP Photo

Adelina Allen Hilton, Director of the Department of International Relations for the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party discusses the policies, goals and principles of ELAM.

Dickson: I like that.

Díaz: To provide you with some background on the growth of ELAM, we started with 18 countries, and then there were 30, and now there are 51 countries in which Cuba has incorporated training programs. The year 1963 marks the start of a cooperative effort between Cuba and the rest of the world to establish medical training programs. This effort also extended throughout Africa. This project is only an extension of Cuban support and work all over the world. You can see this in the red and yellow areas on the map Wherever there is a red and yellow area, Cuba is present, developing human resources in those provinces. There are also programs to combat HIV and malaria — those particular diseases you find in Africa.

This building used to be a naval academy where the merchant marine were trained. When our Commander-in-Chief presented the idea of training doctors here, Comrade Raúl Castro, now our president, was at that time the Minister of the Armed Forces. In 1998 he donated the institution to our Commander-in-Chief so it could be turned into a school for training doctors from Latin America. In September and October of that year, two major hurricanes devastated parts of Central America and the Caribbean, prompting our Commander-in-Chief to take humanitarian action. In November, the school was being refurbished, and by February the first students came from Nicaragua.

Maps in the International Culture Room at ELAM hung handsomely on the walls show the countries of origin of students who come from around the world, including the United States, to study medicine at ELAM. Founded in 1998, the school's first students came from 18 countries, all of which have histories of struggles against colonialism and imperialism, such as Guatemala, El Salvador, Venezuela, Haiti, Nigeria and the territory of Puerto Rico.

On November 15, 1999, the official inauguration ceremony took place in the school. It was presided over by the Commander-in-Chief, with the presence of the King and Queen of Spain and heads of state, who were attending the 9th Afro-American Summit. It has now been 10 years since the school was opened. We have had six graduations, and more than 8,508 students, from more than 30 countries, have graduated.

Dickson: The question a lot of people will ask themselves is this: How is it that a small country like Cuba can provide so much to poor people around the world? With all of its struggles, Cuba is able to give so much support, when countries like the United States are always lacking. That is the question that will come to mind for most people.

Díaz: Cuba does not give what is left over. She shares all that she has. When you talk to the students who come from the U.S., you will widen your perspective. They ask if we have a special subject that we teach them, and we will say "no." We do not have special subjects on values. Students take in what they see in their interpersonal relations with other students, with the professionals, with the people in the health care centers. The students incorporate those values.

Dickson: You know, on the way here at the airport, I had the opportunity to meet some ELAM students. They had nothing but praise for the school. One of the students spoke English and Spanish and stated more than once that he was very pleased with the school and the friends he met while living in Cuba.

All Power to the People!

[1] Reverend Lucius Walker, Jr., highly respected by the Cuban people and the Cuban government, passed away in New York City on September 7, 2010. (See page 10)

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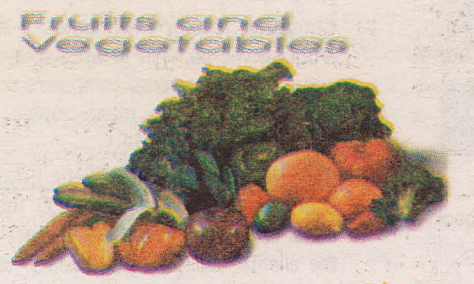

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Mahadere Solomon, N.P.

Established 1980 with Anola Small

CCBPP STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party (CCBPP) is committed to the goals of the Black Panther Party (BPP) as outlined in its Ten-Point Program which was written in 1966 by Party founders Dr. Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale.

The Ten-Point Program outlines goals and objectives toward changing conditions of economic exploitation and political oppression in all low-income and working class communities in the U.S. and elsewhere, as the basis for unity and solidarity.

Also, the CCBPP is committed to the concept of Revolutionary Intercommunalism, introduced by Dr. Newton in 1970 at Boston College. Our Revolutionary Intercommunalism holds that there are basically two sides. On one side there is reactionary intercommunalism which presently holds the world's low-income and working communities under conditions of economic exploitation and political oppression by controlling the wealth, resources and institutions in order to maximize profits for the few. Huey identified this side as the leading reactionary side (the ruling class) which consists of a minority, fewer than five percent of the world population. Under these conditions, reactionary intercommunalism, by and large, keeps the poor and working communities on a cycle of degradation, under conditions of reaction, desperation and poverty, with no end in sight. Newton understood that in order to change these conditions and advance the economic and cultural interests of these oppressed communities of the world, disciplined organizations must be built from the bottom up, enabling these low-income and working communities to fight exploitation and oppression by any means necessary (this fight needs to start in the advanced industrialized U.S. because our nation leads the world in political reaction and economic exploitation). CCBPP advances and upholds the goals which the BPP outlined in its Ten-Point Program, and those goals are about ridding black ghettos and low-income and working communities of economic exploitation and political oppression, understanding that we can reach these goals only by seizing the time at the point of practice.

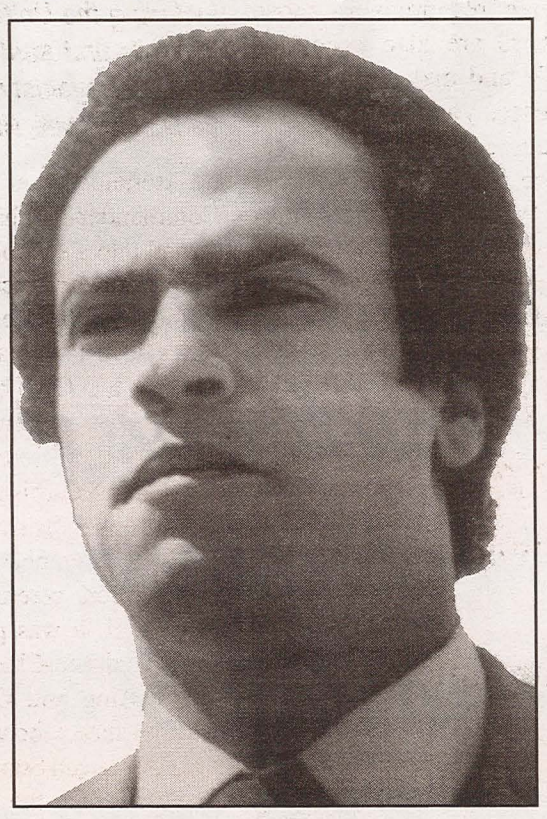
Black Panther Party Ten-Point Program
WHAT WE WANT, WHAT WE BELIEVE

1. WE WANT FREEDOM, WE WANT POWER TO DETERMINE THE DESTINY OF OUR BLACK AND OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES. We believe that Black and oppressed people will not be free until we are able to determine our destinies in our own communities ourselves, by fully controlling all the institutions that exist in our communities.

2. WE WANT FULL EMPLOYMENT FOR OUR PEOPLE. We believe that the federal government is responsible and obligated to give every person employment or a guaranteed income. We believe that if the American businessmen will not give full employment, then the technology and means of production should be taken from the businessmen and placed in the community so that the people of the community can organize and employ all its people and give a high standard of living.

3. WE WANT AN END TO THE ROBBERY BY THE CAPITALIST OF OUR BLACK AND OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES. We believe that the racist government has robbed us and now we are demanding the overdue debt of forty acres and two mules. Forty acres and two mules were promised 100 years ago as restitution for slave labor and mass murder of Black people. We will accept the payment in currency that will be distributed to our many communities. The American racist has taken part in the slaughter of over fifty million Black people. Therefore, we feel this is a modest demand that we make.

4. WE WANT DECENT HOUSING, FIT FOR THE SHELTER OF HUMAN BEINGS. We believe that if the landlords will not give decent housing to our Black and oppressed communities, then housing and the land should be made into cooperatives so that the people in our communities, with government aid, can build and make decent housing for the people.



Black Panther Founder, Dr. Huey P. Newton

5. WE WANT EDUCATION FOR OUR PEOPLE THAT EXPOSES THE TRUE NATURE OF THIS DECADENT AMERICAN SOCIETY. WE WANT EDUCATION THAT TEACHES US OUR TRUE HISTORY AND OUR ROLE IN THE PRESENT-DAY SOCIETY. We believe in an educational system that will give to our people a knowledge of self. If you do not have knowledge of yourself and your position in the society and the world, then you will have little chance to know anything else.

6. WE WANT COMPLETELY FREE HEALTH CARE FOR ALL BLACK AND OPPRESSED PEOPLE. We believe that the government must provide, free of charge, for the people, health facilities that will not only treat our illnesses, most of which have come about as a result of our oppression, but will also develop preventive medical programs to guarantee our future survival. We believe that mass health education and research programs must be developed to give all Black and oppressed people access to advanced scientific and medical information, so we may provide ourselves with proper medical attention and care.

7. WE WANT AN IMMEDIATE END TO POLICE BRUTALITY AND MURDER OF BLACK PEOPLE, OTHER PEOPLE OF COLOR, ALL OPPRESSED PEOPLE INSIDE THE UNITED STATES. We believe that the racist and fascist government of the United States uses its domestic enforcement agencies to carry out its program of oppression against Black people, other people of color, and poor people inside the United States. We believe it is our right, therefore, to defend ourselves against such armed forces and that all Black and oppressed people should be armed for self-defense of our homes and communities against these fascist police forces.

8. WE WANT AN IMMEDIATE END TO ALL WARS OF AGGRESSION. We believe that the various conflicts which exist around the world stem directly from the aggressive desires of the U. S. ruling circle and government to force its domination upon the oppressed people of the world. We believe that if the U. S. government or its lackeys do not cease these aggressive wars that it is the right of the people to defend themselves by any means necessary against their aggressors.

9. WE WANT FREEDOM FOR ALL BLACK AND POOR OPPRESSED PEOPLE NOW HELD IN U. S. FEDERAL, STATE, COUNTY, CITY, AND MILITARY PRISONS AND JAILS. WE WANT TRIALS BY A JURY OF PEERS FOR ALL PERSONS ARE CHARGED WITH SO-CALLED CRIMES UNDER THE LAWS OF THIS COUNTRY. We believe that the many Black and poor oppressed people now held in U. S. prisons and jails have not received fair and impartial trials under a racist and fascist judicial system and should be free from incarceration. We believe in the ultimate elimination of all wretched, inhuman penal institutions, because the masses of men and women imprisoned inside the United States or by the U. S. military are the victims of oppressive conditions that are the real cause of their imprisonment. We believe that when persons are brought to trial that they must be guaranteed, by the United States, juries of their peers, attorneys of their choice and freedom from imprisonment while awaiting trials.

10. WE WANT LAND, BREAD, HOUSING, EDUCATION, CLOTHING, JUSTICE, PEACE AND PEOPLE'S COMMUNITY CONTROL OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY. When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and, accordingly, all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But, when a long train of abuses and usurpation, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism. It is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security.

Everett and Jones

SUPER

Congratulations to The Commemorator on 20 years of keeping the legacy of the Black Panther Party Alive!

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